MAKOTO YUKIMURA

VINLAND SAGA

BOOK·SIX

VINLAND
SAGA

VINLAND
SAGA

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AFTER THAT, THORFINN JOINED ASKELADD'S BAND FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF EVENTUALLY AVENGING HIS FATHER'S MURDER. HE PARTICIPATED IN MANY BATTLES AND DEVELOPED INTO A FEARSOME FIGHTER.

IN THE MIDST OF THE WAR WITH ENGLAND, ASKELADD SUCCEEDED IN FREEING THE CAPTIVE CANUTE, SECOND PRINCE OF DENMARK, AND LAUNCHED A PLOY TO CAPTURE THE THRONE. BUT AFTER KILLING KING SWEYN OF DENMARK, ASKELADD PERISHED BEFORE THORFINN'S EYES.

WITHOUT A PURPOSE IN LIFE, THE EMPTY THORFINN FELL FROM WARRIOR TO SLAVE, AND EVENTUALLY WOUND UP LIVING ON AN ENORMOUS FARM OWNED BY A MAN NAMED KETIL.

THERE, HE MET A WHOLE NEW HOST OF PEOPLE: HIS FELLOW SLAVE, EINAR; THE OLD MASTER SVERKEL, WHO HOPES TO DIE OUT IN THE FIELDS; KETIL'S SLAVE AND LOVER ARNHEID; AND "SNAKE," THE HEAD OF THE FARM'S BODYGUARDS.

IN HIS NEW LIFE WITH THEM, THORFINN GRADUALLY BEGAN TO UNDERSTAND SOMETHING OF THE "TRUE WARRIOR'S LIFE" THAT HIS FATHER THORS SOUGHT.

THE STORY SO FAR

IN ELEVENTH-CENTURY SCANDINAVIA, A MAN NAMED THORS WAS THE GREATEST AND MOST FEARED WARRIOR ALIVE, KNOWN AS "THE TROLL OF JOM."

WHEN HE GREW WEARY OF FIGHTING, HE ABANDONED HIS WARRIOR'S CALLING AND TOOK HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTER INTO HIDING IN ICELAND.

ONCE THEY HAD ESTABLISHED THEMSELVES THERE, THORS MADE A LIVING CULTIVATING THE LAND AND FATHERED A SON.

THE BOY'S NAME WAS THORFINN, AND HE GREW INTO A HEALTHY SIX-YEAR-OLD UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF THORS AND HIS FAMILY.

BUT THE JOMSVIKINGS, THORS'S FORMER BAND, LEARNED OF HIS WHEREABOUTS AND CAME TO DRAFT HIM INTO THE WAR BETWEEN DENMARK AND ENGLAND.

WHEN THORS WAS ALREADY UNDERWAY, HE DISCOVERED THAT THORFINN HAD SNUCK ABOARD THE SHIP OUT OF CURIOSITY AND DESIRE TO BE A WARRIOR.

BEFORE THEY COULD FINISH THEIR VOYAGE, THORS WAS ATTACKED BY ASKELADD'S BAND OF VIKINGS, AND HE GAVE HIS LIFE PROTECTING HIS SON.

BEFORE THORFINN COULD LEARN WHY THORS HAD GIVEN UP THE SWORD FOR GOOD, HE LOST HIS FATHER...

WHAT DO WORKERS GAIN FROM THEIR TOIL? I HAVE SEEN THE BURDEN GOD HAS LAID ON THE HUMAN RACE. HE HAS MADE EVERYTHING BEAUTIFUL IN ITS TIME. HE HAS ALSO SET ETERNITY IN THE HUMAN HEART; YET NO ONE CAN FATHOM WHAT GOD HAS DONE FROM BEGINNING TO END.

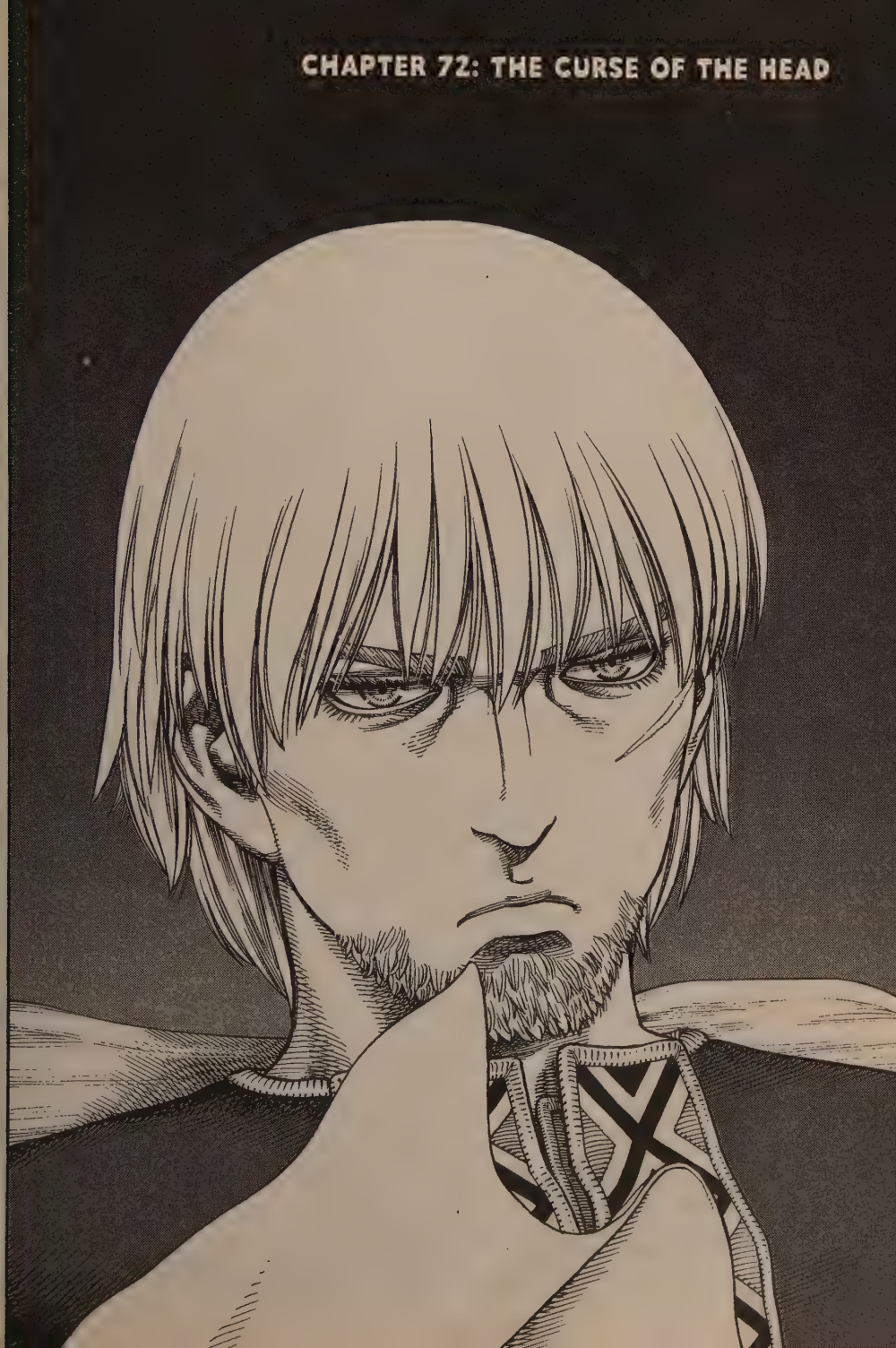
(ECCLESIASTES 3:9-11)

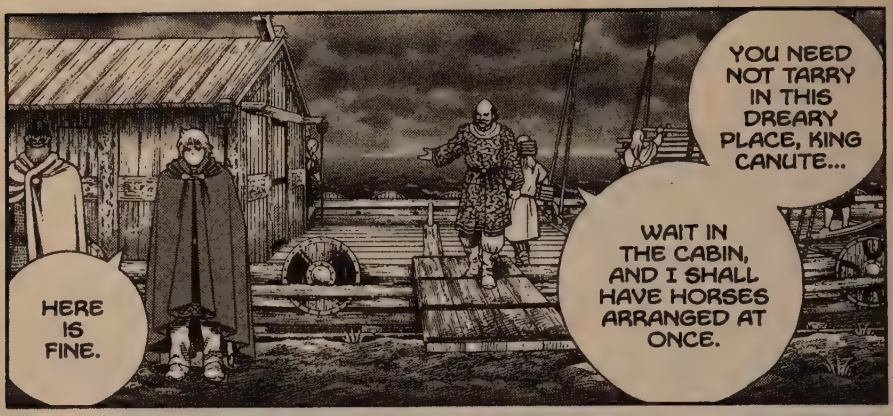
...KING CANUTE.
IT IS TIME TO WAKE. THE SHIP WILL LAND IN JELLING MOMENTARILY...
YOUR PARDON, MAJESTY.
TAP TAP

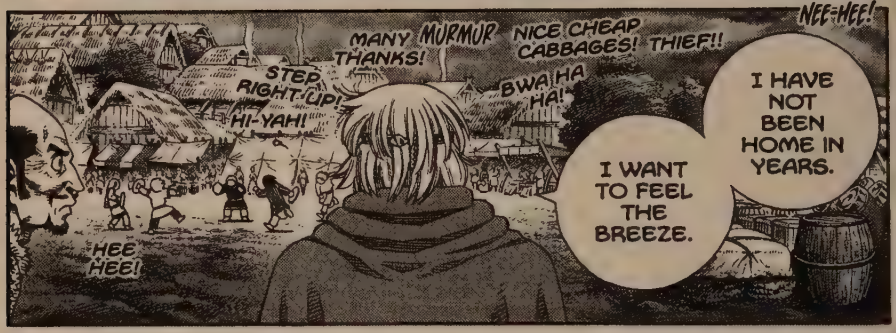
FSHHH

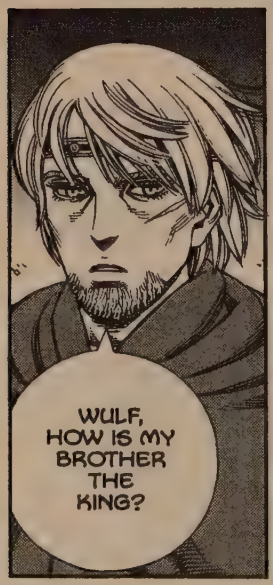
KING HARALD'S BASE
JELLING
JUTLAND PENINSULA
DENMARK
1018

CHAPTER 72: THE CURSE OF THE HEAD



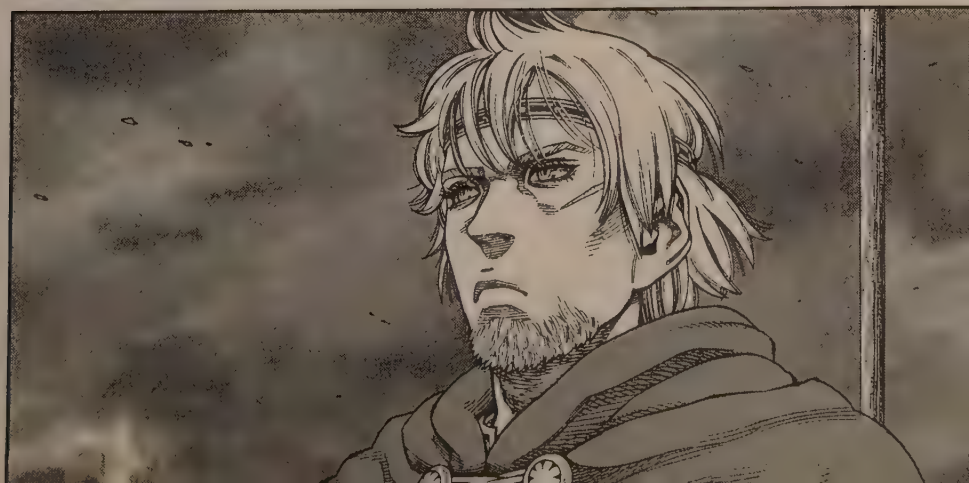

HERE IS FINE.
WAIT IN THE CABIN, AND I SHALL HAVE HORSES ARRANGED AT ONCE.
YOU NEED NOT TARRY IN THIS DREARY PLACE, KING CANUTE...

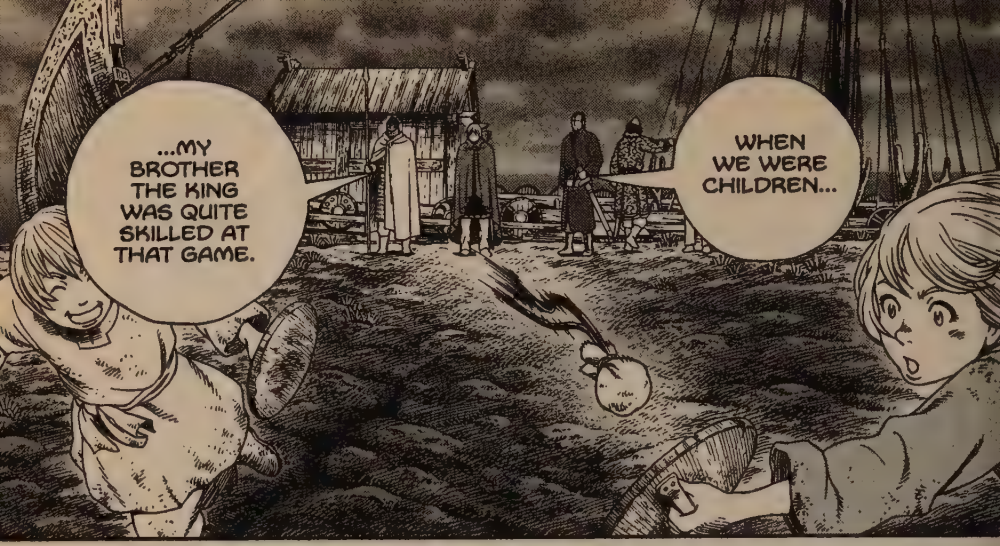

HEE HEE!
STEP RIGHT UP!
HI-YAH!
MANY THANKS!
MURMUR
NICE CHEAP CABBAGES!
THIEF!!
BWA HA HA!
NEE-HEE!
I WANT TO FEEL THE BREEZE.
I HAVE NOT BEEN HOME IN YEARS.

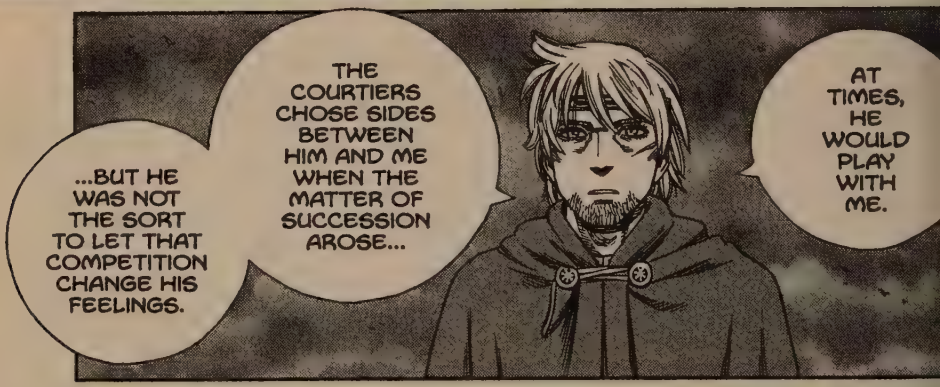

WULF, HOW IS MY BROTHER THE KING?

I AM OVERJOYED TO HEAR OF YOUR SAFE RETURN FROM ENGLAND.
AYE.

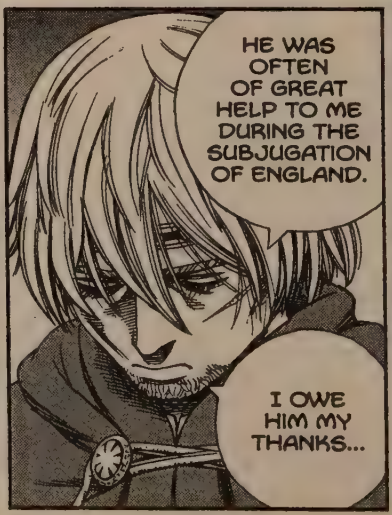
KING CANUTE!




...MY BROTHER THE KING WAS QUITE SKILLED AT THAT GAME.
WHEN WE WERE CHILDREN...

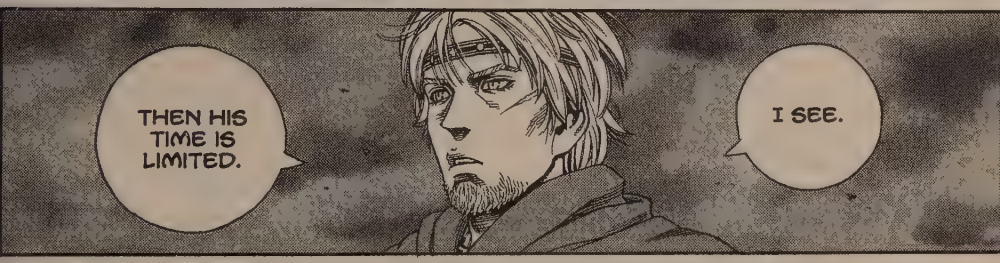

...BUT HE WAS NOT THE SORT TO LET THAT COMPETITION CHANGE HIS FEELINGS.
THE COURTIERS CHOSE SIDES BETWEEN HIM AND ME WHEN THE MATTER OF SUCCESSION AROSE...
AT TIMES, HE WOULD PLAY WITH ME.

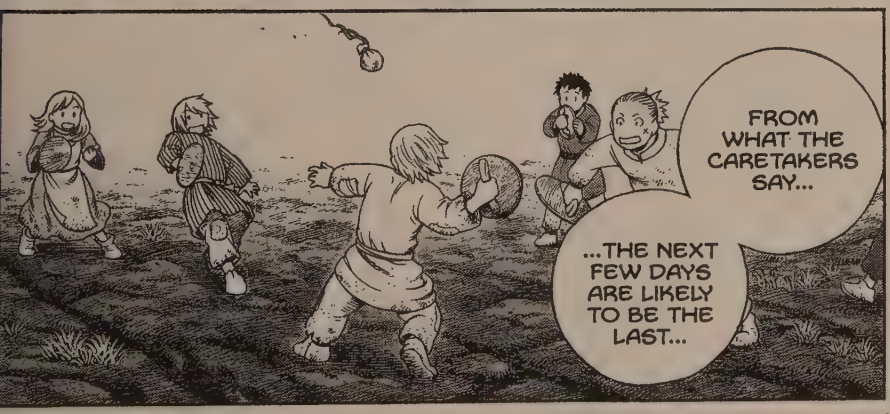
AH!

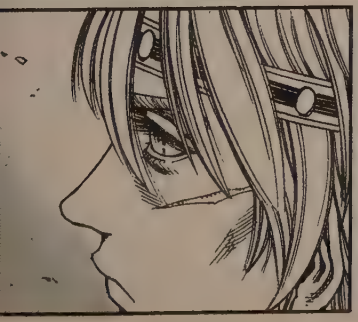

HE WAS OFTEN OF GREAT HELP TO ME DURING THE SUBJUGATION OF ENGLAND.
I OWE HIM MY THANKS...

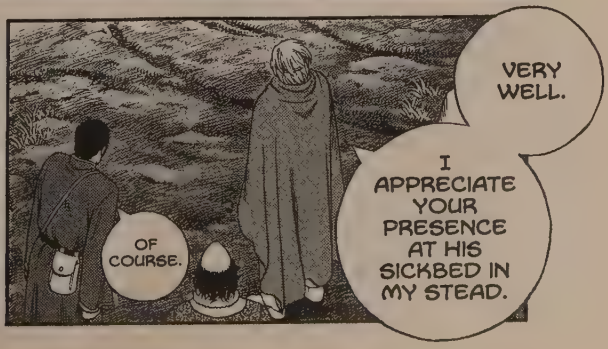
...

THE SICKNESS HAS ADVANCED THIS MONTH. HE IS UNABLE EVEN TO HOLD A CONVERSATION NOW.
WELL...
I MUST ADMIT THAT KING HARALD IS NOT IN GOOD HEALTH.

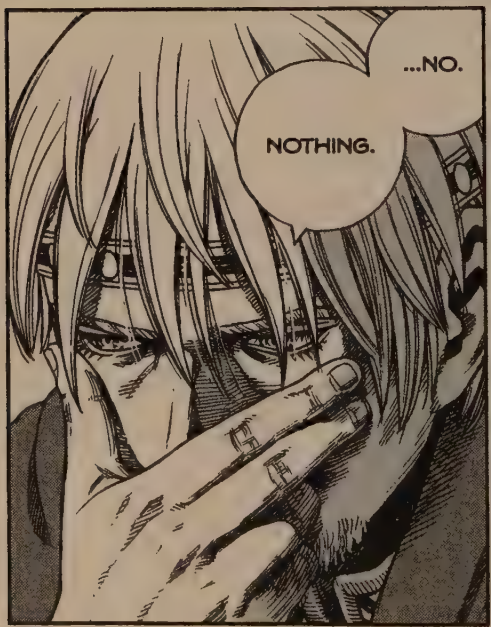

THEN HIS TIME IS LIMITED.
I SEE.

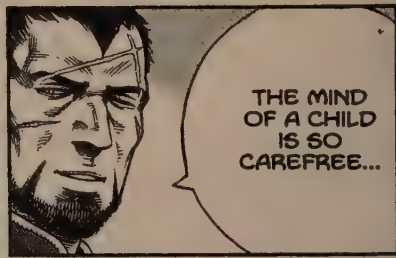

FROM WHAT THE CARETAKERS SAY...
...THE NEXT FEW DAYS ARE LIKELY TO BE THE LAST...

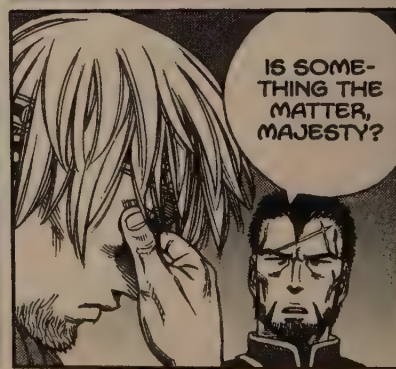


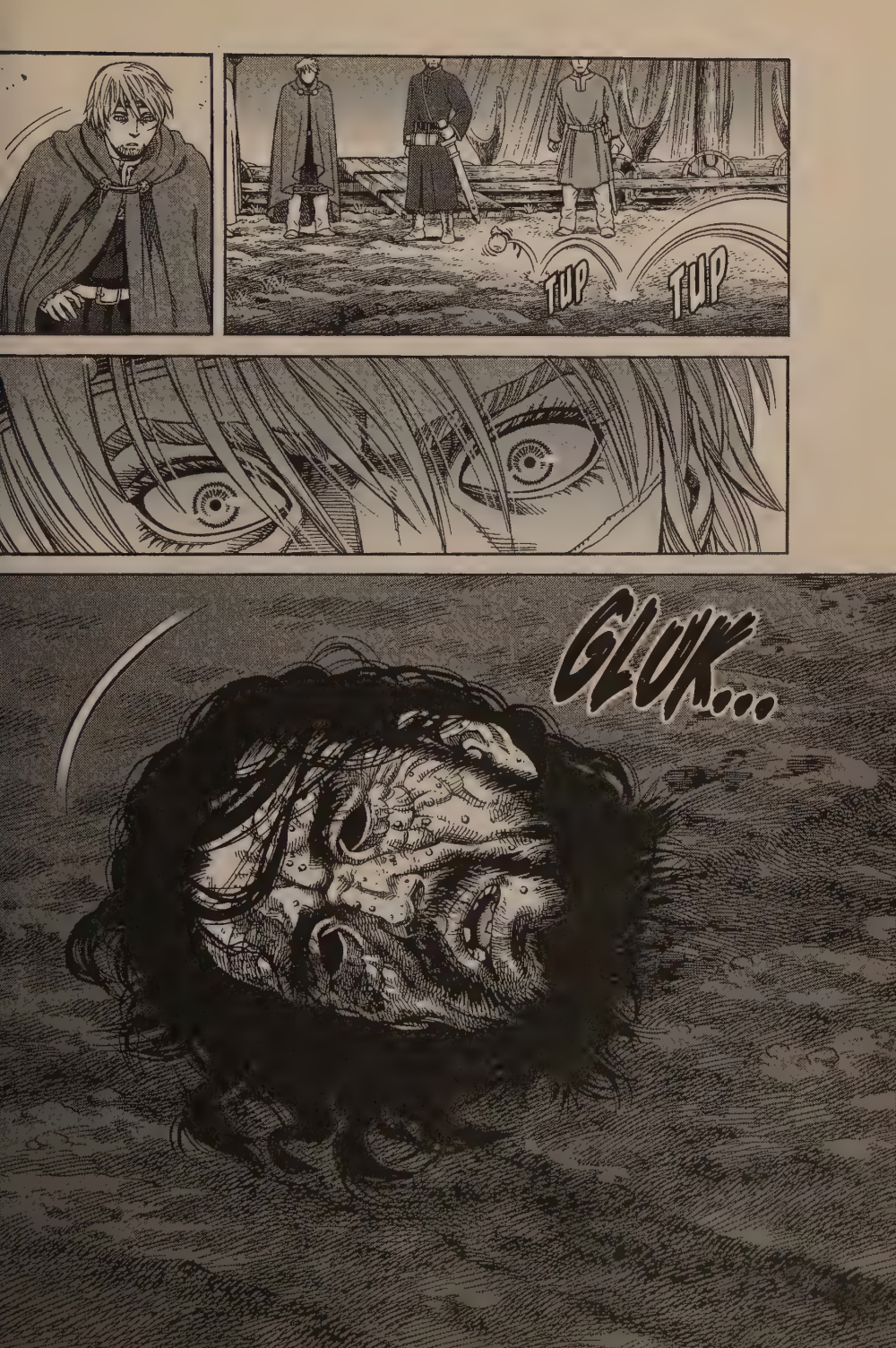

OF COURSE.
VERY WELL.
I APPRECIATE YOUR PRESENCE AT HIS SICKBED IN MY STEAD.

GO ON, YOU SCAMPS!
FIND ANOTHER PLACE TO PLAY!


...NO.
NOTHING.


THE MIND OF A CHILD IS SO CAREFREE...

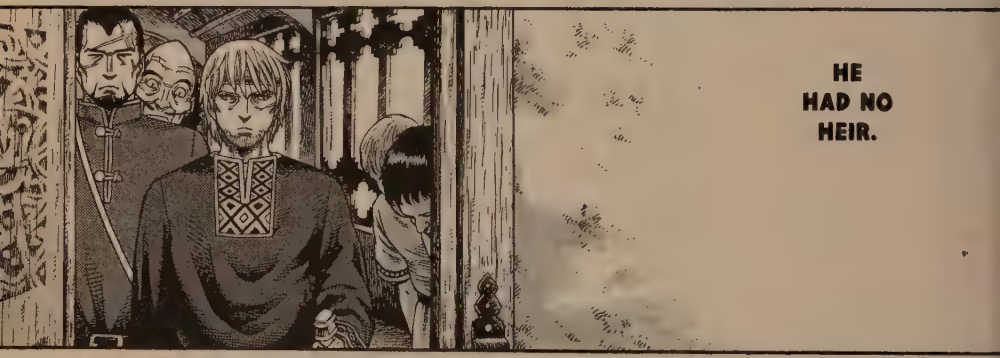

IS SOME-THING THE MATTER, MAJESTY?


TUP
TUP
GLUK...

...JUST AFTER CANUTE CLAIMED THE THRONE OF ENGLAND, HARALD FELL ILL.

BUT IN THE YEAR 1018...

HARALD SENT A LARGE FLEET TO CANUTE'S AID IN CONQUERING ENGLAND, ACTIVELY ASSISTING HIS BROTHER'S CAMPAIGN.



HE HAD NO HEIR.

...HIS TWO SONS SUCCEEDED HIM IN DIFFERENT TERRITORIES.

IN THE FOUR YEARS AFTER THE DEATH OF KING SWEYN OF DENMARK...

AND TO CANUTE, THE YOUNGER, ENGLAND.

TO HARALD, THE ELDER, WENT DENMARK.

Norway

North Sea

THE TWO KINGDOMS WERE ON GOOD TERMS.

Denmark

Jelling

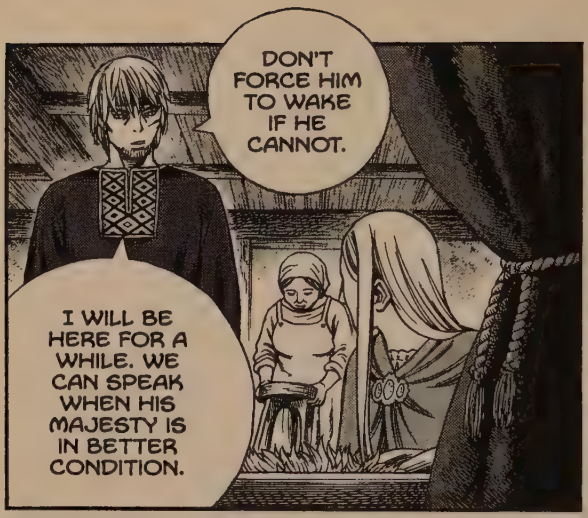
Ireland

Wales

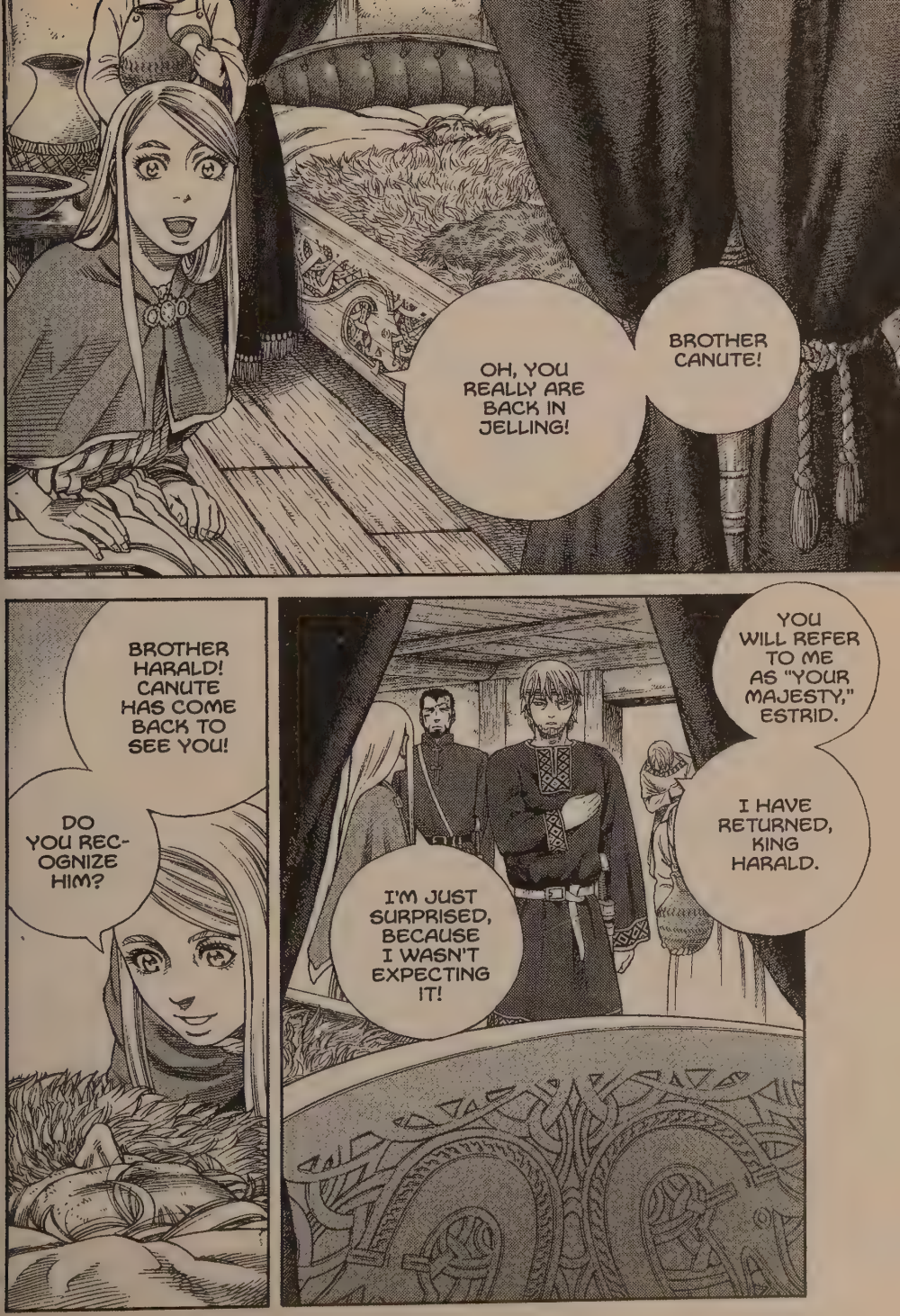
England

London

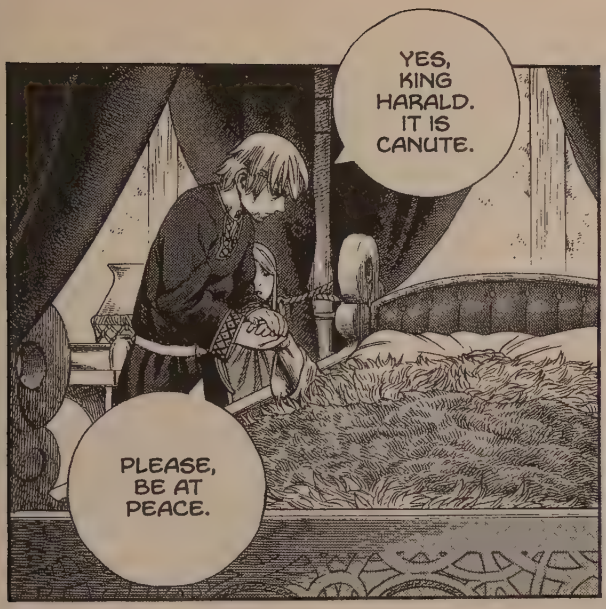
Germany

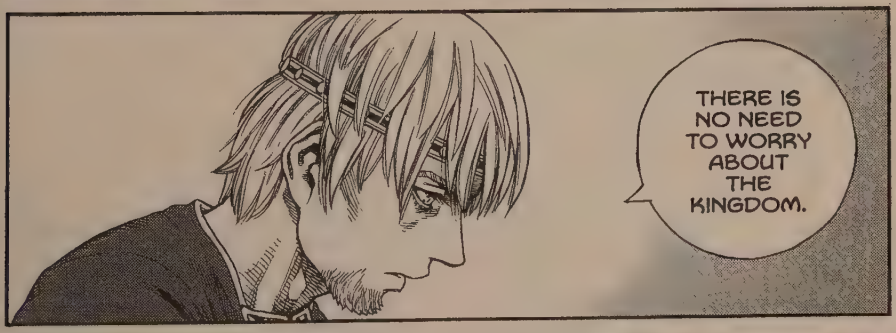

DON'T FORCE HIM TO WAKE IF HE CANNOT.
I WILL BE HERE FOR A WHILE. WE CAN SPEAK WHEN HIS MAJESTY IS IN BETTER CONDITION.

CAN...
...UTE...

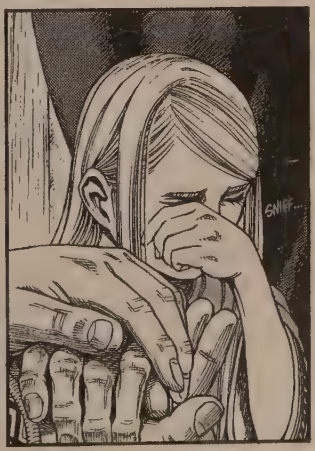

OH, YOU REALLY ARE BACK IN JELLING!
BROTHER CANUTE!
BROTHER HARALD! CANUTE HAS COME BACK TO SEE YOU!
DO YOU REC-OGNIZE HIM?
YOU WILL REFER TO ME AS "YOUR MAJESTY," ESTRID.
I HAVE RETURNED, KING HARALD.
I'M JUST SURPRISED, BECAUSE I WASN'T EXPECTING IT!

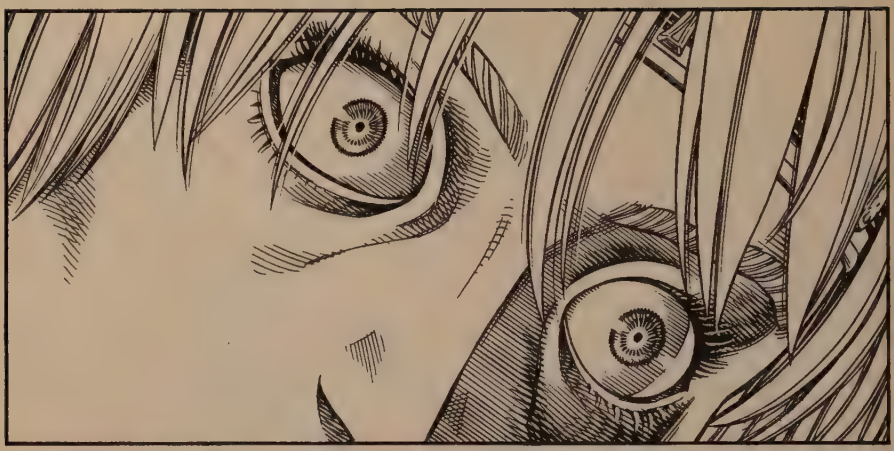
I LEAVE...
...YOUR HANDS...
DENMARK...
...IN...
MUR MUR...
OHHH!
YOU MUST NOT SPEAK IN SUCH ABSOLUTES, KING HARALD.
...AND, BEFORE LONG, WE SHALL PLAY AS WE DID IN OUR CHILDHOOD.
YOUR HEALTH WILL RECOVER...

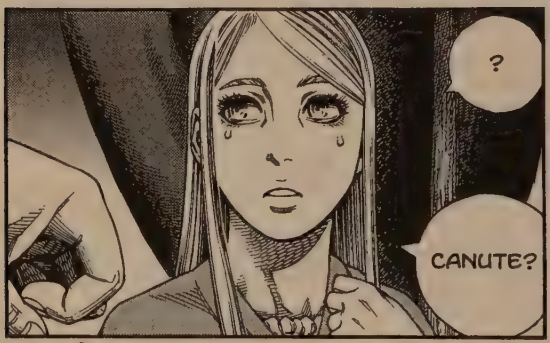

YES, KING HARALD. IT IS CANUTE.
PLEASE, BE AT PEACE.

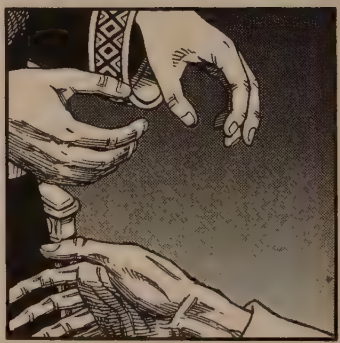

THERE IS NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THE KINGDOM.

...WAITING ...FOR YOU.
I HAVE...
...BEEN ...


SNIFF...

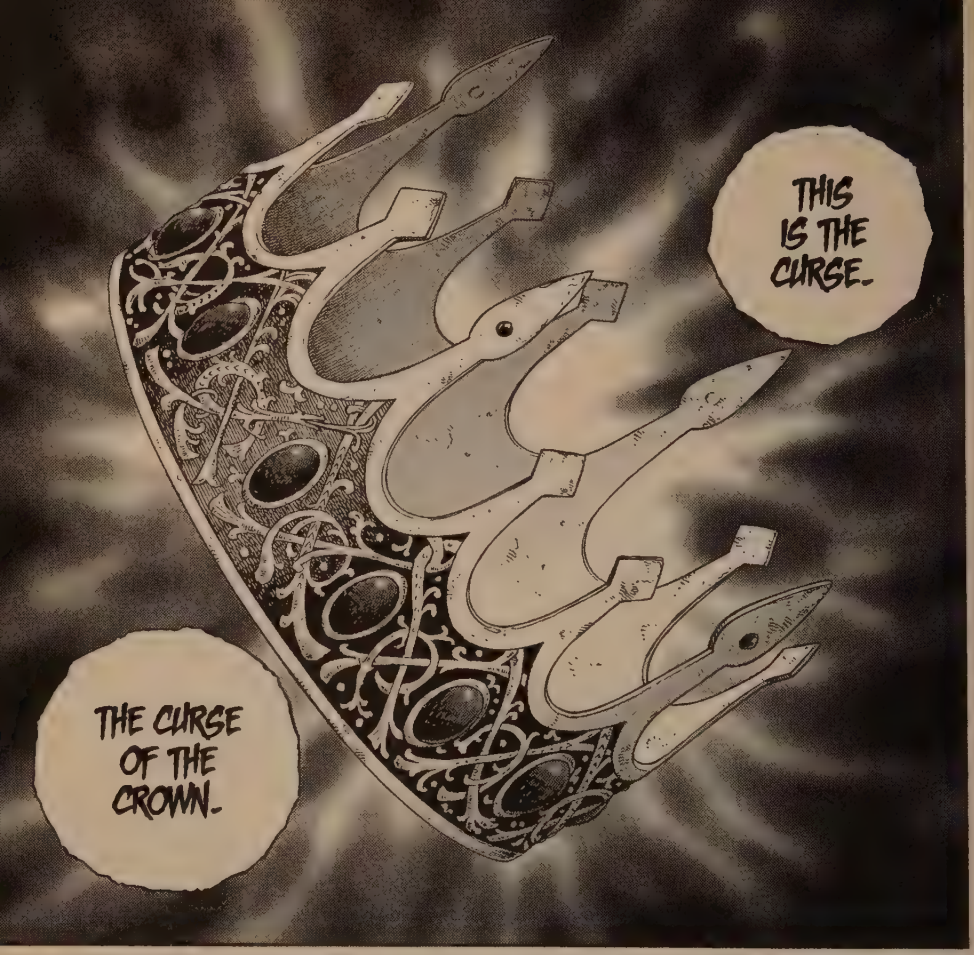



?
CANUTE?

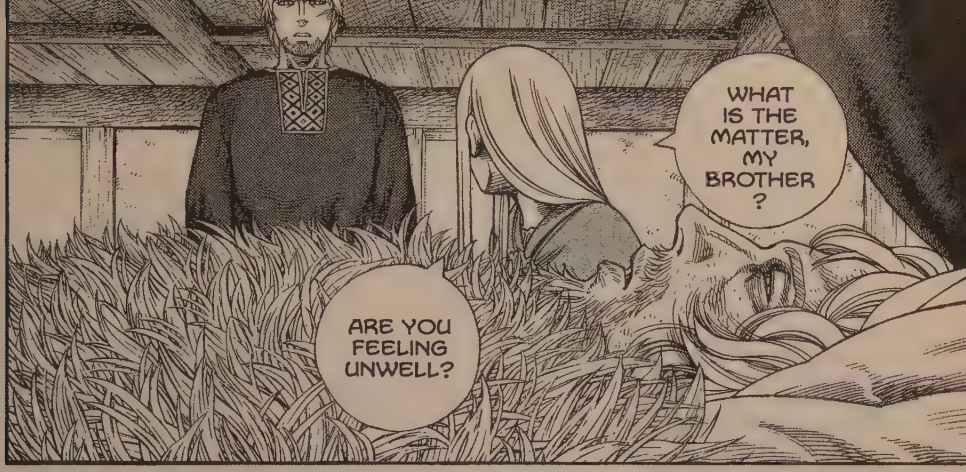


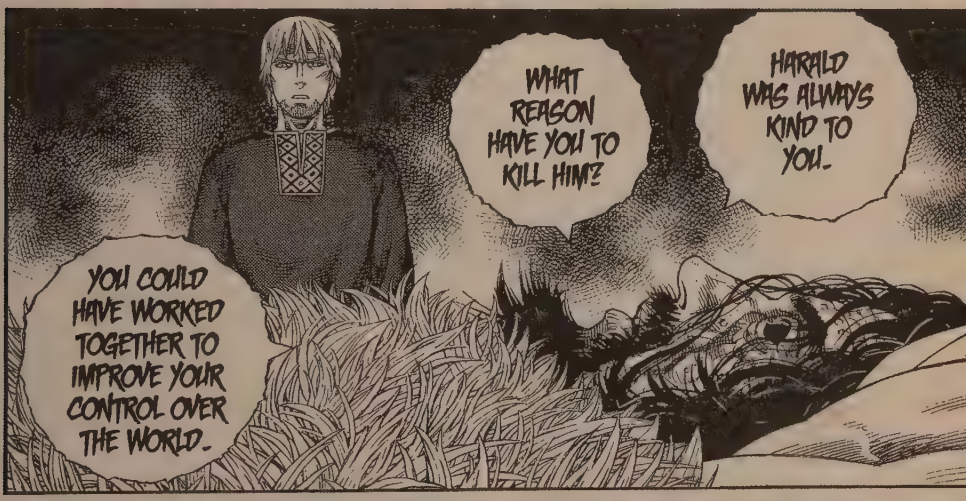
AND WHAT DO YOU STAND TO GAIN FROM THIS?
WHAT A PIOUS FARCE. OFFERING PLATITUDES TO THE MAN YOU POISONED AS HE LIES ON HIS DEATHBED.

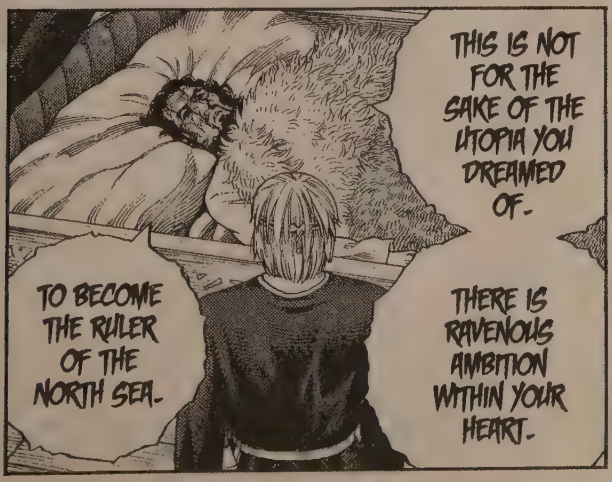
OH, HOW YOU'VE GROWN, CANUTE.
YOU'VE LEARNED TO LIE THROUGH YOUR TEETH WITHOUT GIVING ANYTHING AWAY.

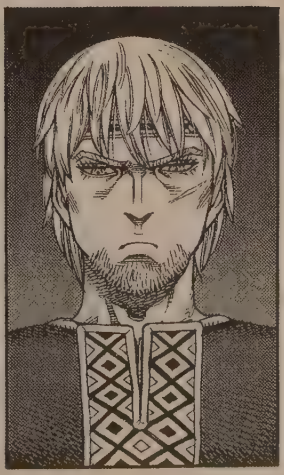

THIS IS THE CURSE.
THE CURSE OF THE CROWN.

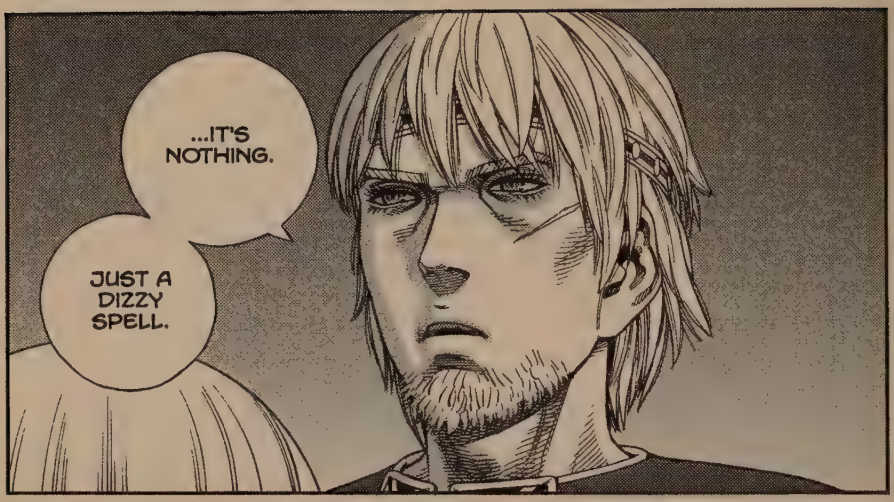
THERE IS NO ESCAPE.
YOU WILL WEAR BOTH THE CROWNS OF DENMARK AND ENGLAND...
...AND YOUR SUFFERING SHALL BE TWICE MINE.

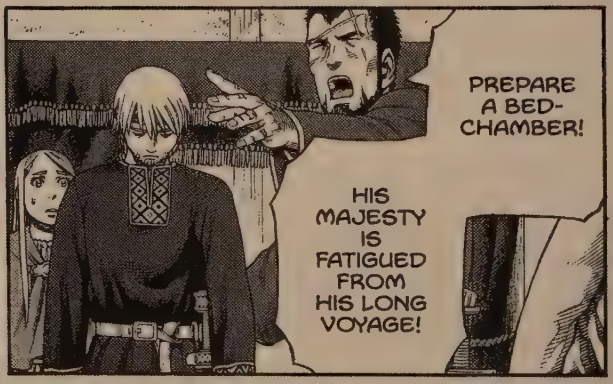

WHAT IS THE MATTER, MY BROTHER ?
ARE YOU FEELING UNWELL?

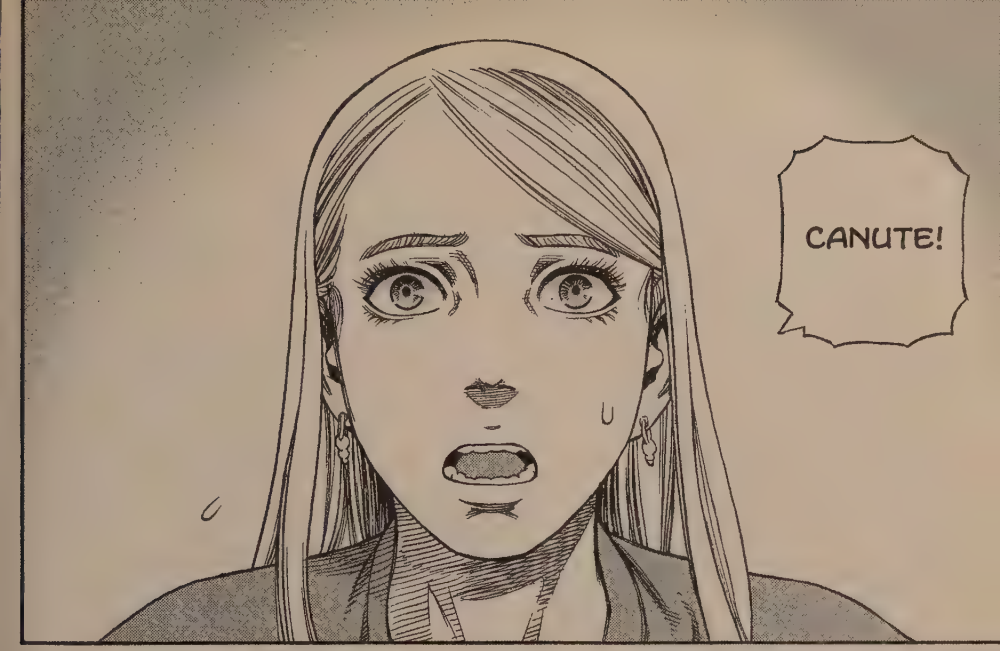

WHAT REASON HAVE YOU TO KILL HIM?
HARALD WAS ALWAYS KIND TO YOU.
YOU COULD HAVE WORKED TOGETHER TO IMPROVE YOUR CONTROL OVER THE WORLD.

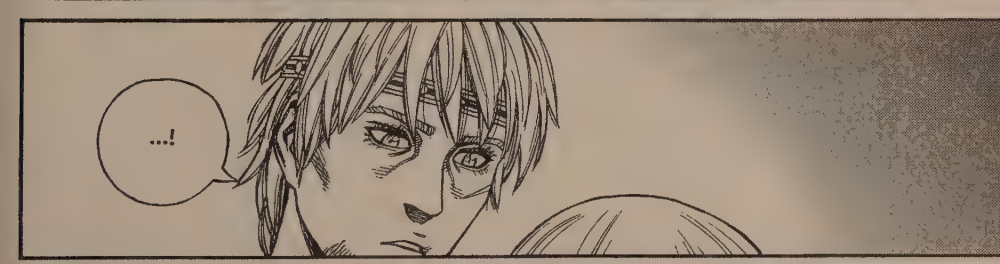

THIS IS NOT FOR THE SAKE OF THE UTOPIA YOU DREAMED OF.
TO BECOME THE RULER OF THE NORTH SEA.
THERE IS RAVENOUS AMBITION WITHIN YOUR HEART.

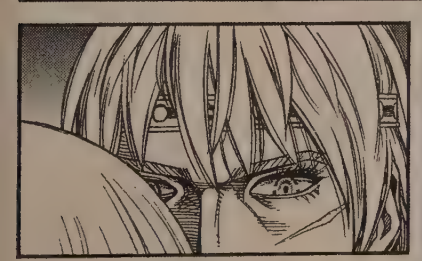



...IT'S NOTHING.
JUST A DIZZY SPELL.


PREPARE A BED-CHAMBER!
HIS MAJESTY IS FATIGUED FROM HIS LONG VOYAGE!

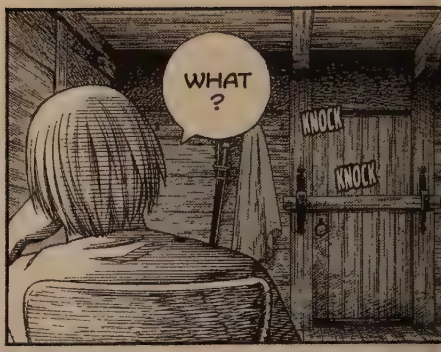

CANUTE!


...!

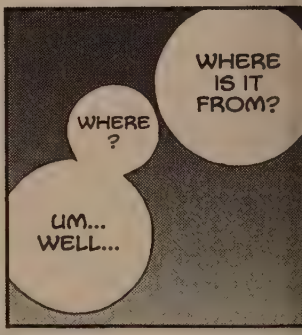


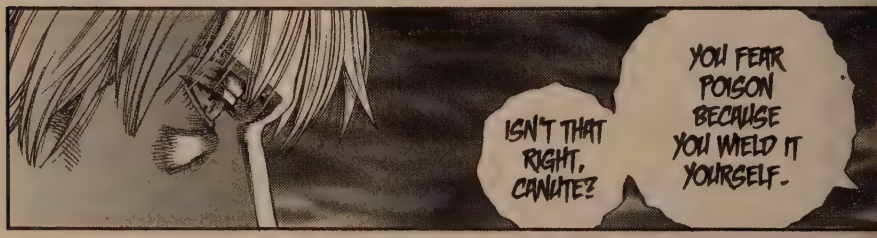
WHAT'S THE MATTER? YOU WERE STARING OFF INTO SPACE...
YOU AREN'T SICK TOO, ARE YOU?

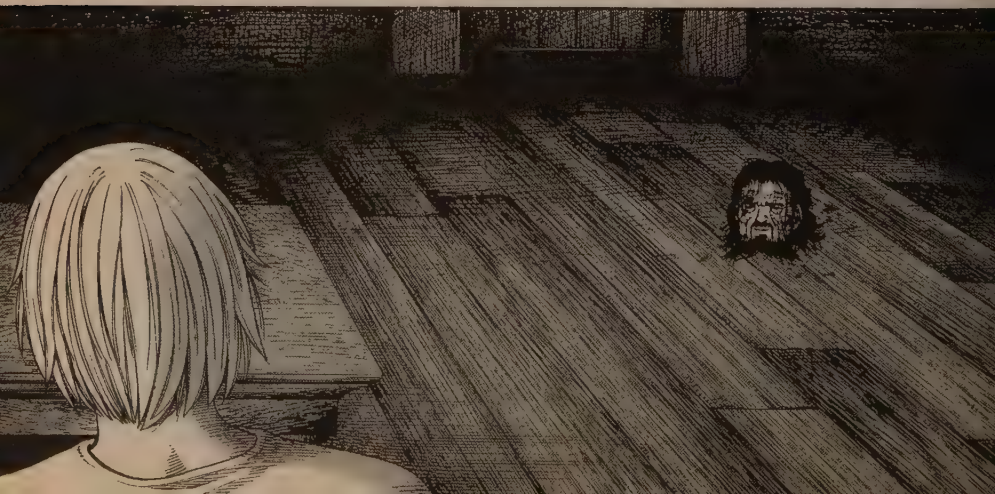
LADY ESTRID INSTRUCTED ME TO BRING YOU SOMETHING TO DRINK.

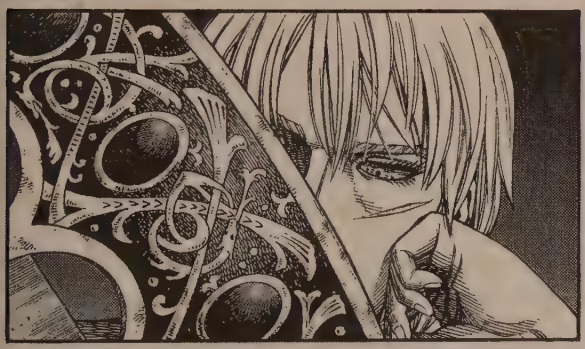

WHAT ?
KNOCK
KNOCK

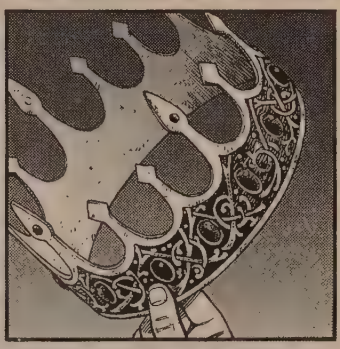
...I DON'T NEED IT.
I AM NOT THIRSTY.


WHERE IS IT FROM?
WHERE ?
UM... WELL...


YOU FEAR POISON BECAUSE YOU WIELD IT YOURSELF.
ISN'T THAT RIGHT, CANUTE?







KING HARALD'S DEATH WAS NECESSARY.

TWO KINGS WOULD LEAD ONLY TO DISASTER.

THE LAND NEEDED TO BE UNITED TO CREATE PARADISE.

GREAK...

I MUST ADMIT...

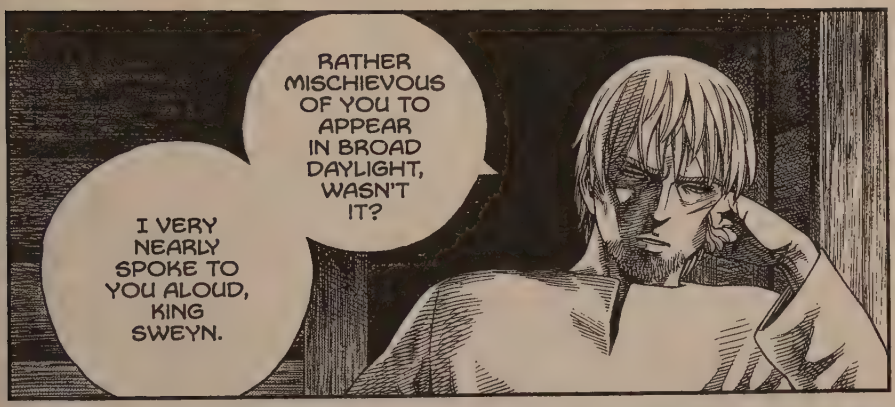
...YOU'VE CERTAINLY LEARNED HOW TO THINK LIKE A KING, CANUTE.

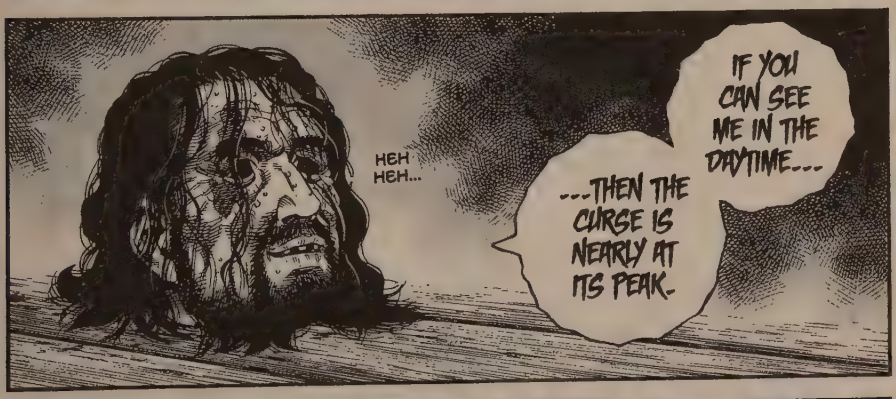
SO AS LONG AS YOUR GOAL IS NOBLE, YOUR MEANS ARE BEYOND REPROACH.

WHY DO YOU LAUGH?

HEH HEH HEH...

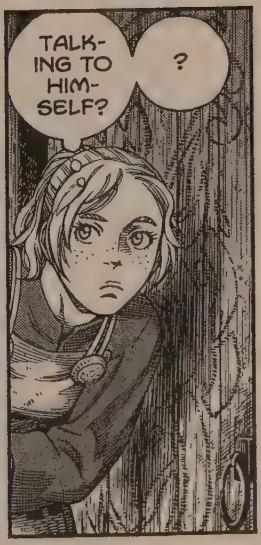
HEH

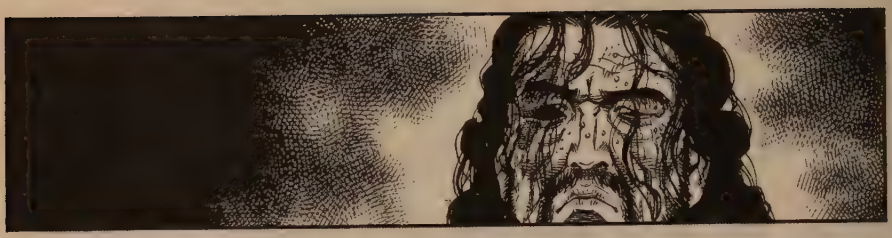

RATHER MISCHIEVOUS OF YOU TO APPEAR IN BROAD DAYLIGHT, WASN'T IT?
I VERY NEARLY SPOKE TO YOU ALOUD, KING SWEYN.

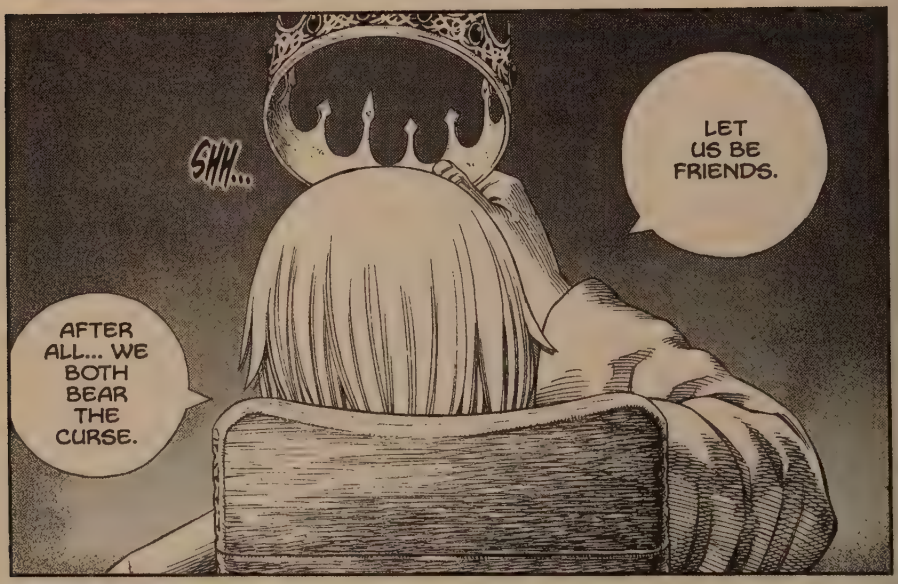

IF YOU CAN SEE ME IN THE DAYTIME...
HEH HEH...
...THEN THE CURSE IS NEARLY AT ITS PEAK.

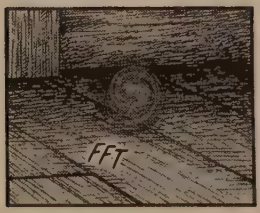
CRAP!
HE'S SO SHARP!
ZWEEE

O-OF COURSE, MAJESTY !!
ACK!!!
YOU DON'T NEED TO STAND THERE.
I HAVE NO NEED OF YOU.

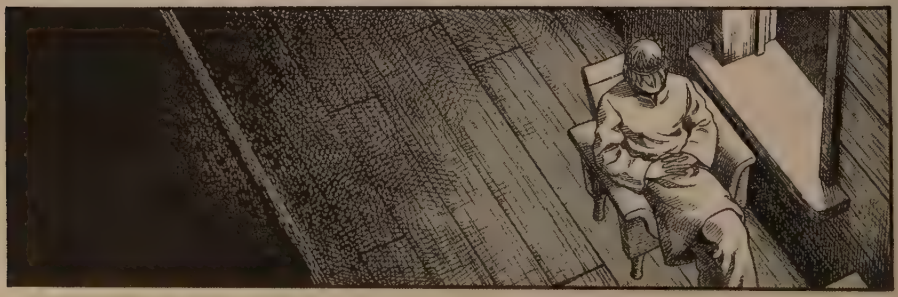

TALK-ING TO HIM-SELF?
?

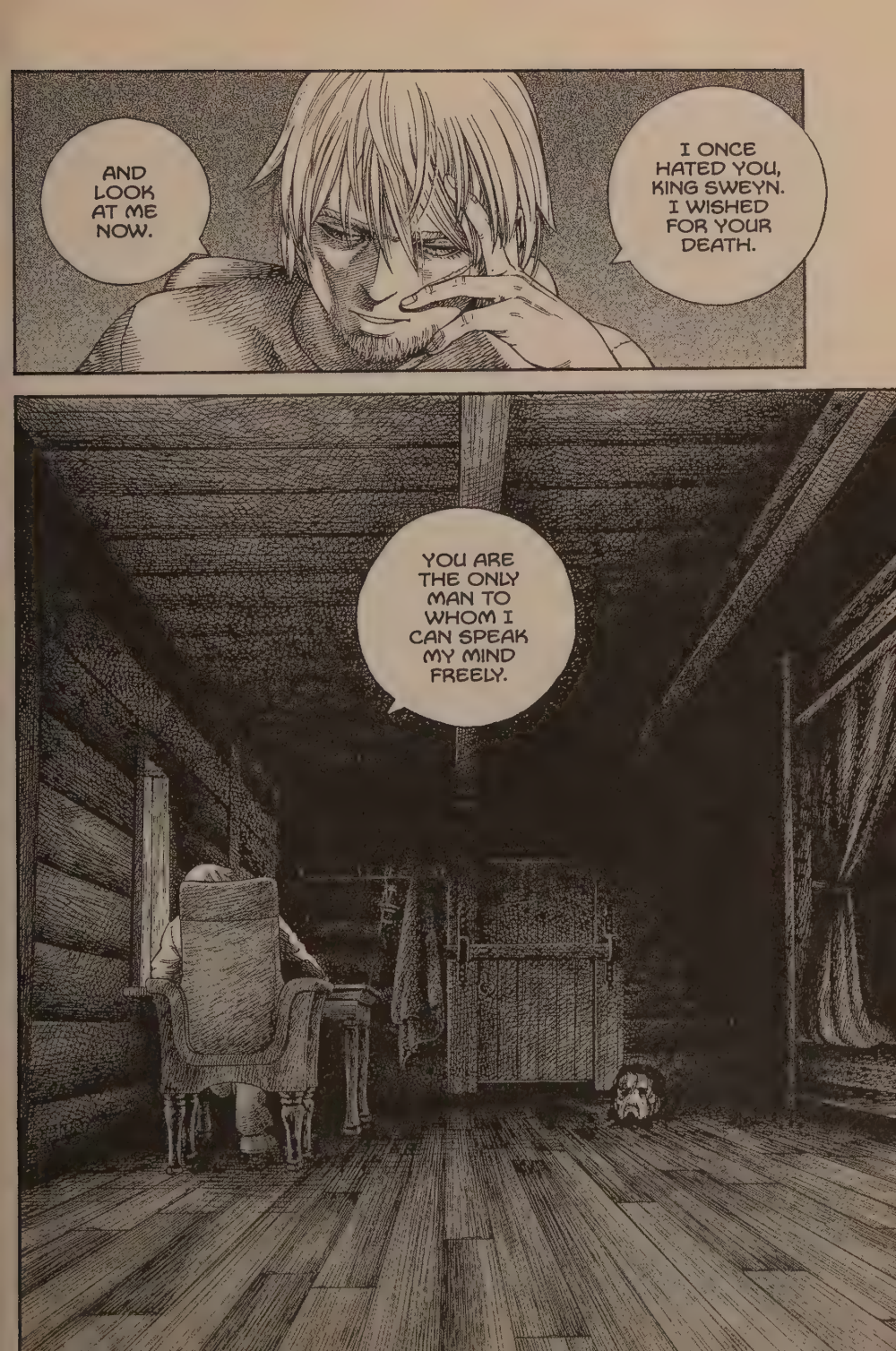



SHH...
LET US BE FRIENDS.
AFTER ALL... WE BOTH BEAR THE CURSE.

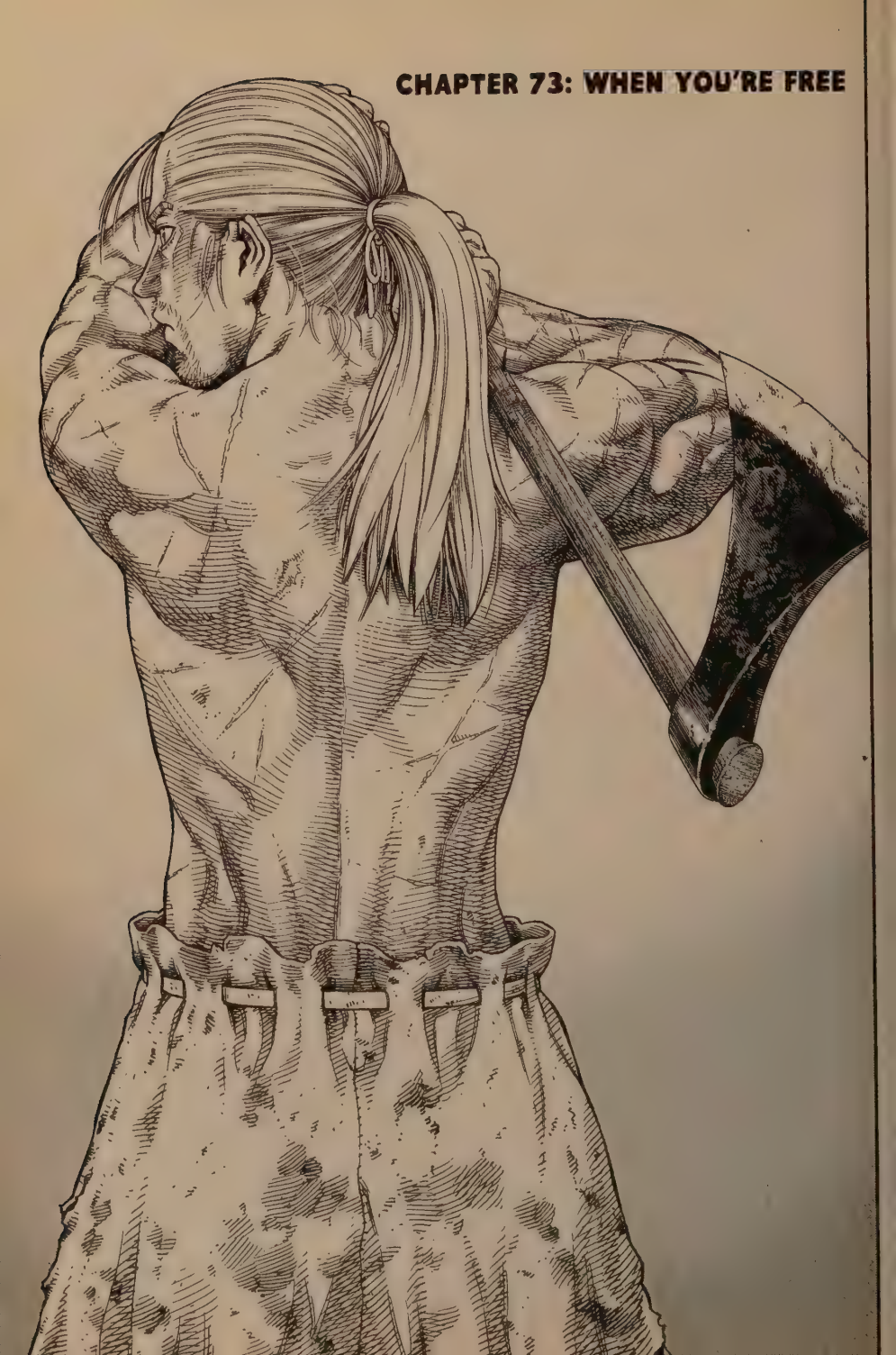

FFT

VRRM...



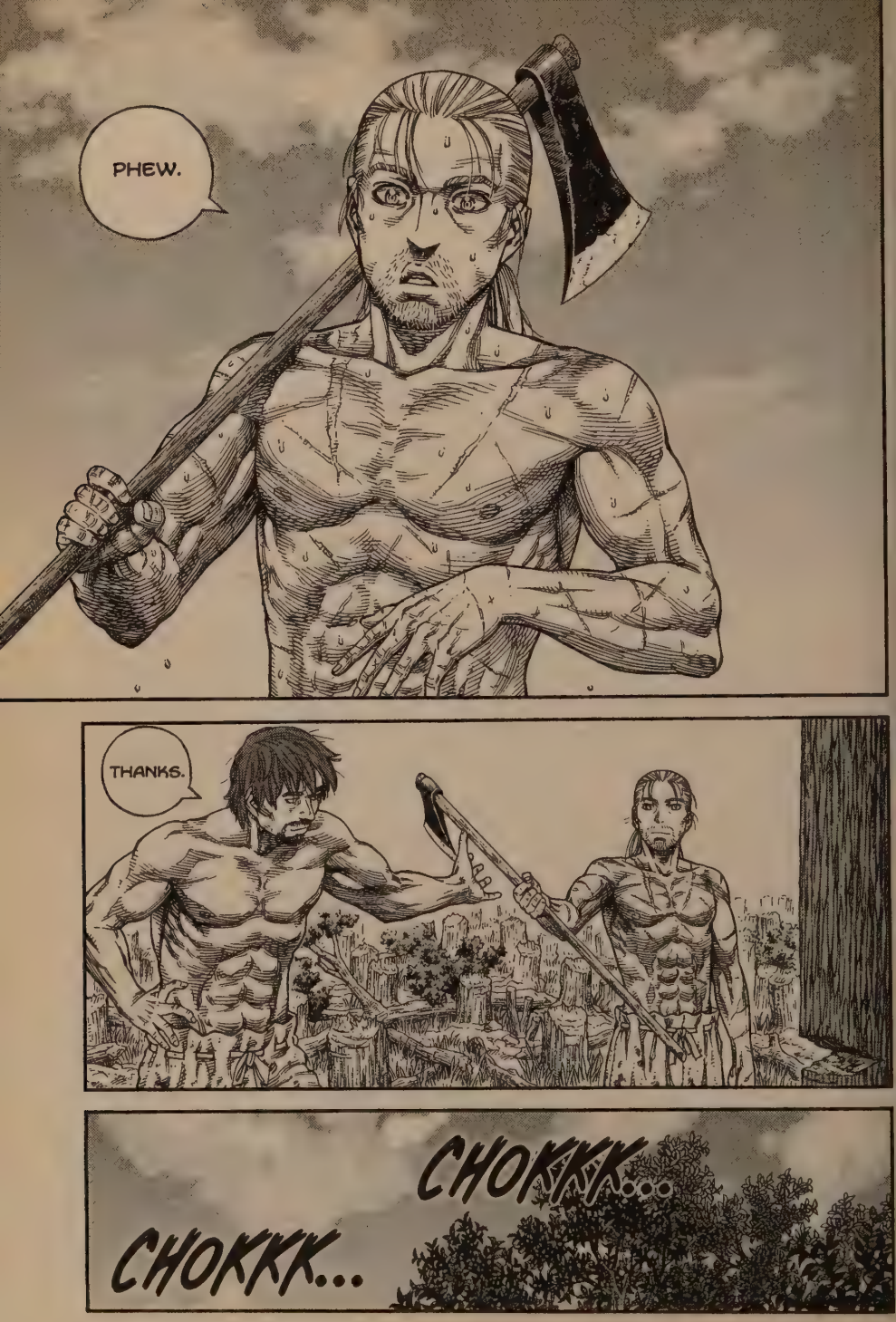

AND LOOK AT ME NOW.
I ONCE HATED YOU, KING SWEYN. I WISHED FOR YOUR DEATH.
YOU ARE THE ONLY MAN TO WHOM I CAN SPEAK MY MIND FREELY.

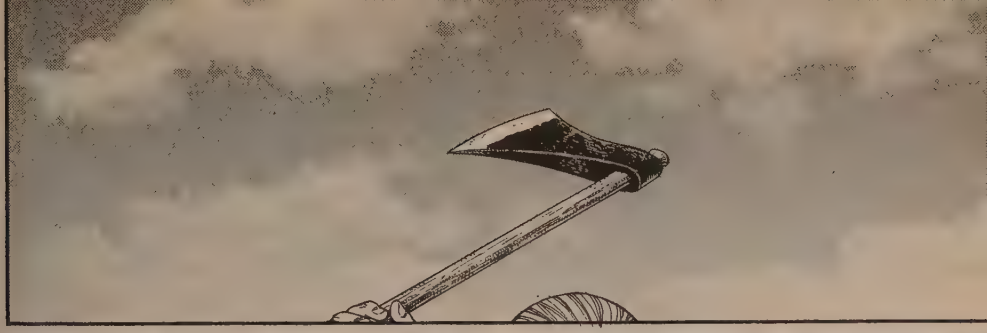
CHAPTER 73: WHEN YOU'RE FREE



NOTHING TO IT.

CHAPTER 72 - END

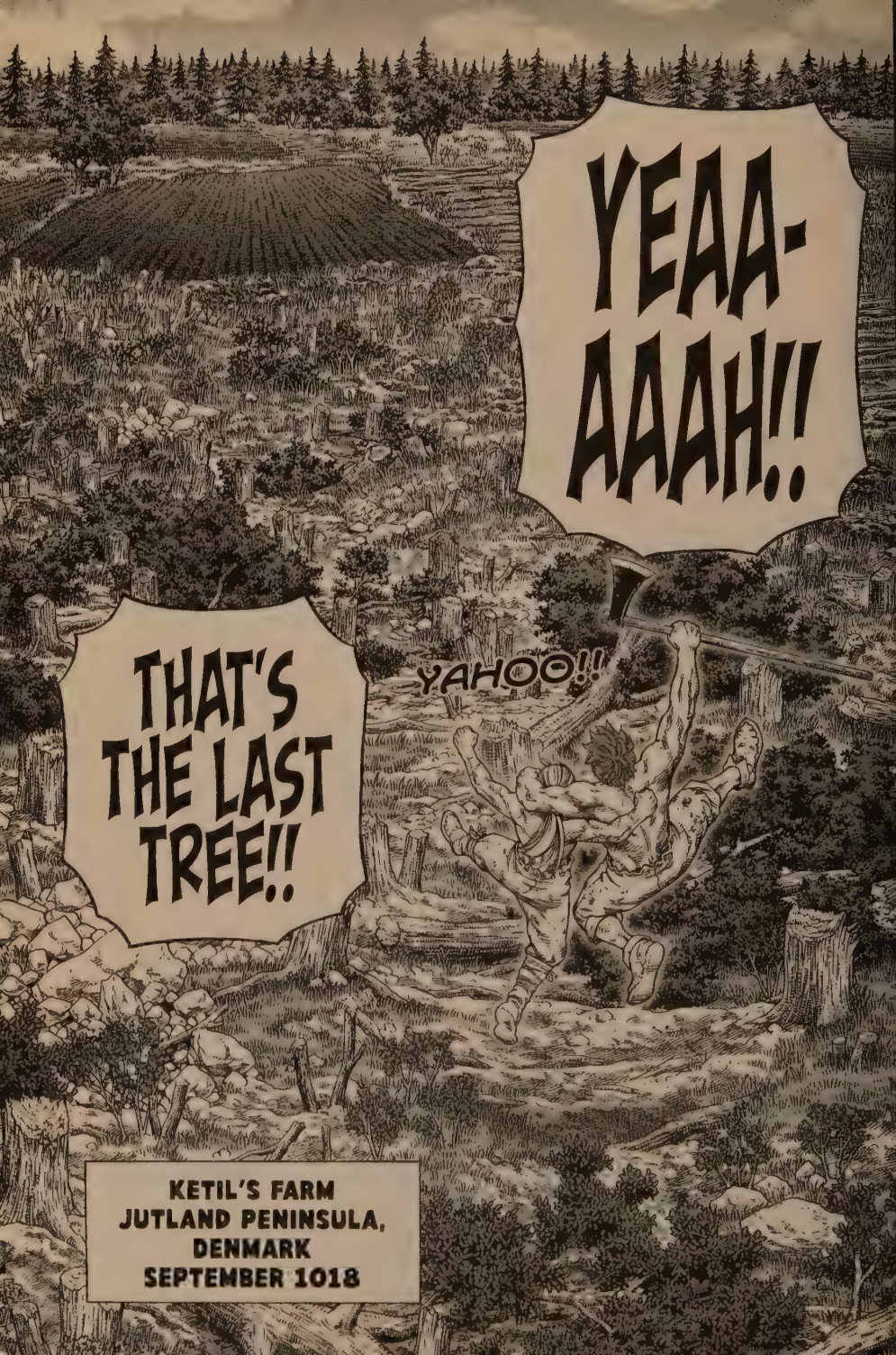

PHEW.
THANKS.
CHOKKK...
CHOKKK...

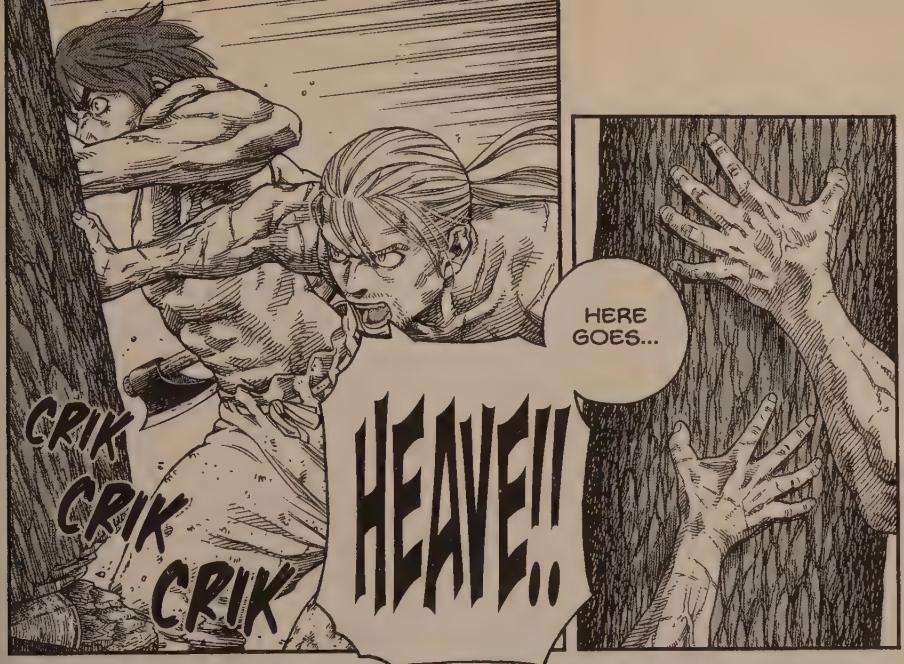


KCHAKK

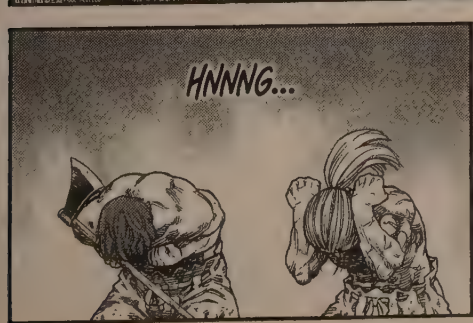
CHOKKK...
CHOKKK...

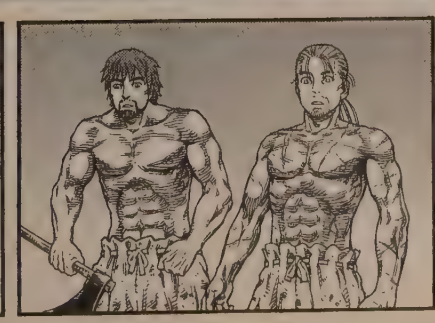
CHOKKK...


YEAA-AAAH!!
THAT'S THE LAST TREE!!
YAHOO!!
KETIL'S FARM
JUTLAND PENINSULA, DENMARK
SEPTEMBER 1018


HERE GOES...
CRIK CRIK CRIK
HEAVE!!

CRAK
CRUKK
CRAKKLE
ZDUMM...


HNNNG...



YES.

AND IT ONLY TOOK... OVER THREE YEARS.

YOU AND I TURNED AN ENTIRE FOREST INTO FARMLAND.

WELL, THAT'S THE TRAGIC PART OF BEING A SLAVE.

HA HA.

IF ONLY ALL OF THIS LAND ACTUALLY *BELONGED* TO US.

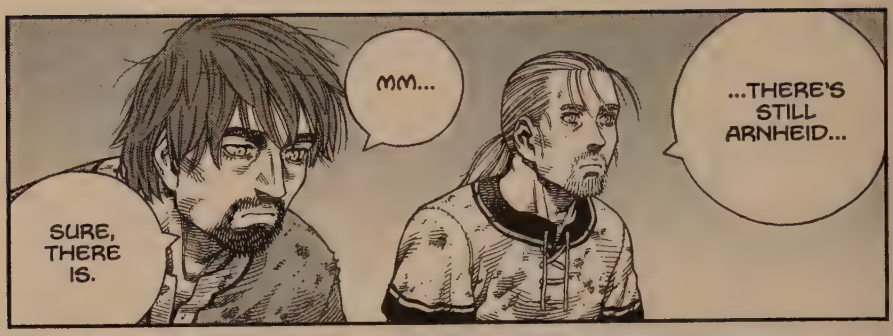
AYE.

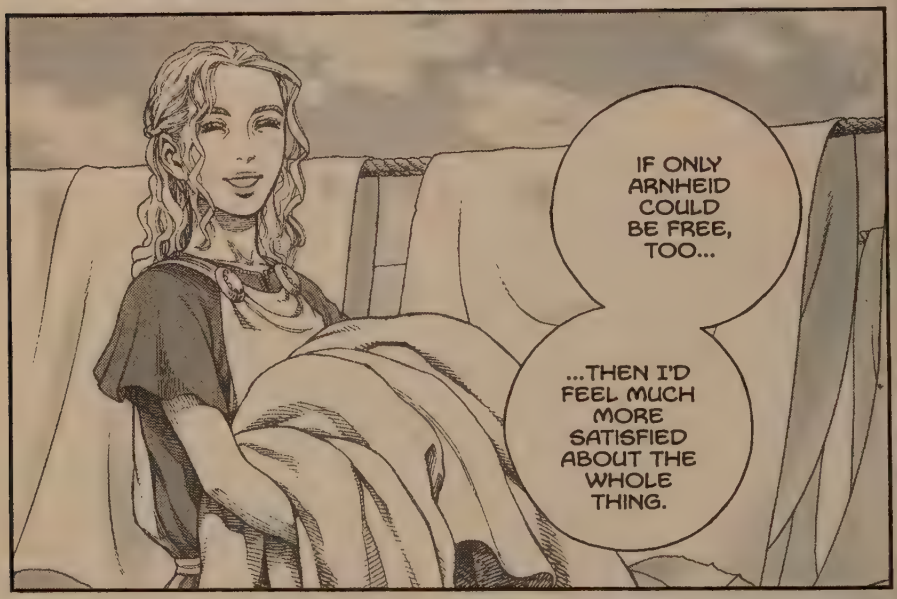
PATER TOLD ME NOT LONG AGO.

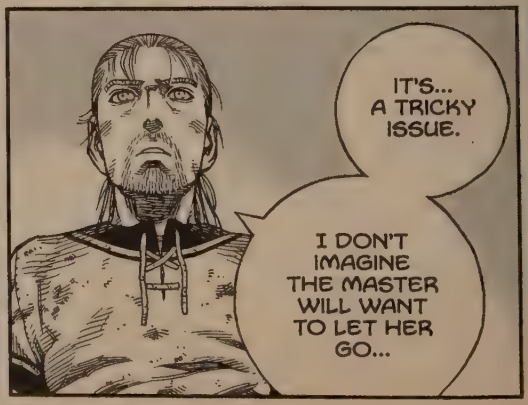
WE WORKED HARD.

IT'S JUST ABOUT TIME...

WHAP
WHAP
BWA HA HA HA!
WHY YOU-!
OW OW OW!
WHOP
HA HA
HA HA HA
BUT WE SET OUR MINDS TO IT, AND WE DID IT.
YOU KNOW, I CAN'T BELIEVE MY EYES.


SURE, THERE IS.
MM...
...THERE'S STILL ARNHEID...


IF ONLY ARNHEID COULD BE FREE, TOO...
...THEN I'D FEEL MUCH MORE SATISFIED ABOUT THE WHOLE THING.


IT'S... A TRICKY ISSUE.
I DON'T IMAGINE THE MASTER WILL WANT TO LET HER GO...

AND WITH SOME CHANGE TO SPARE, HE SAYS.

...WE'LL BE ABLE TO BUY BACK OUR FREEDOM.

WITH THE NEXT SUMMER'S HARVEST FROM THIS CULTIVATION...

...

I SEE...

I'M NOT SURE. NO FAMILY BACK THERE TO RETURN TO...

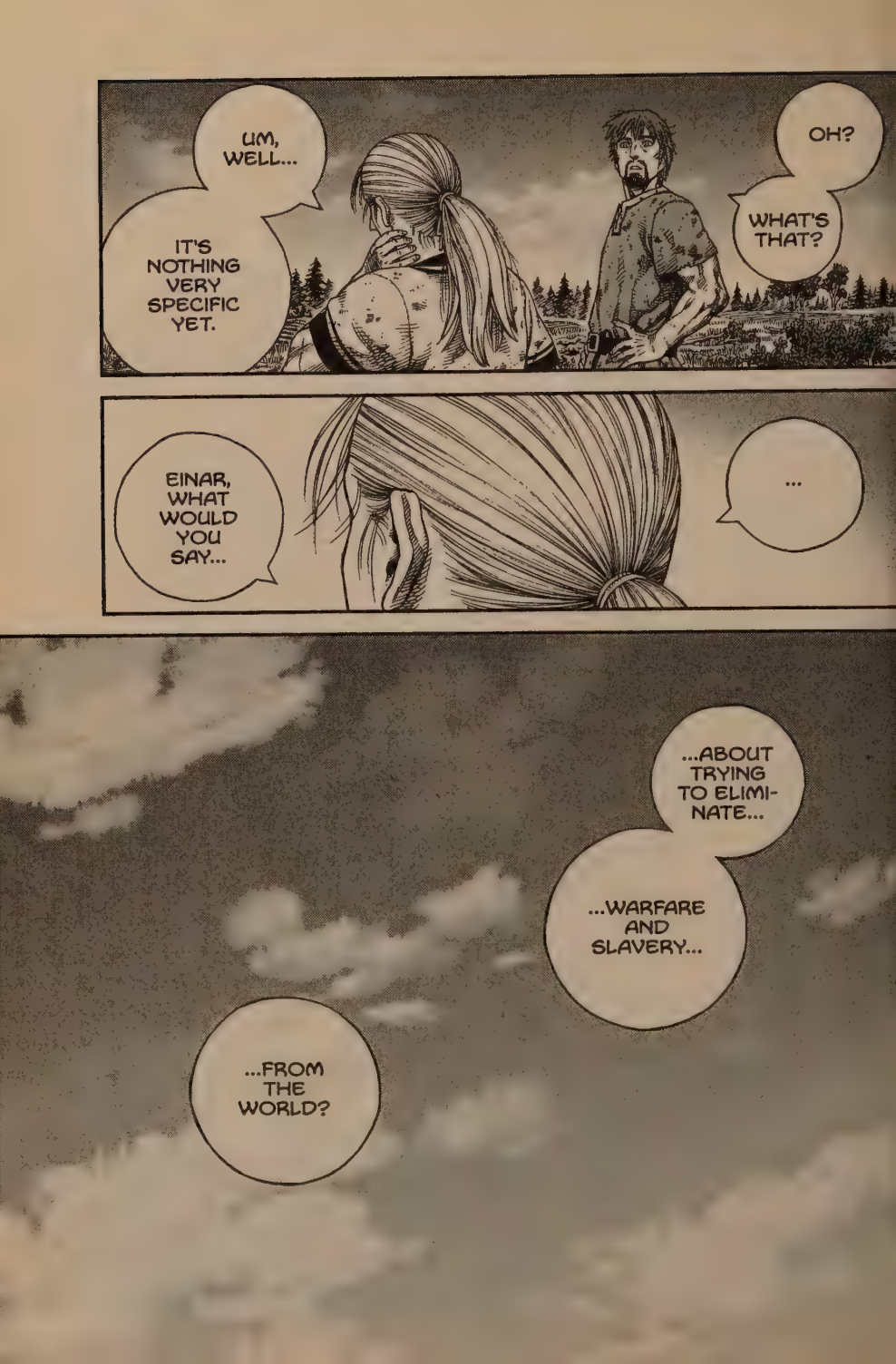
BESIDES...

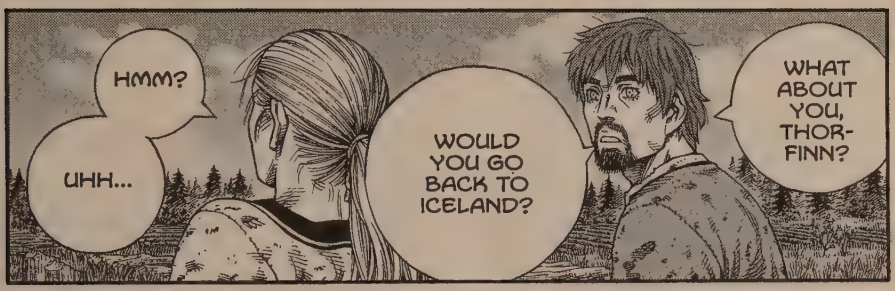
EINAR... WHAT WILL YOU DO WHEN YOU'RE FREE?

MM?

HMM...

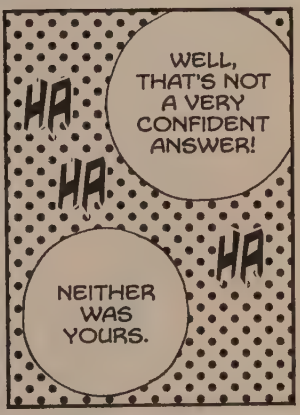
RETURN HOME?

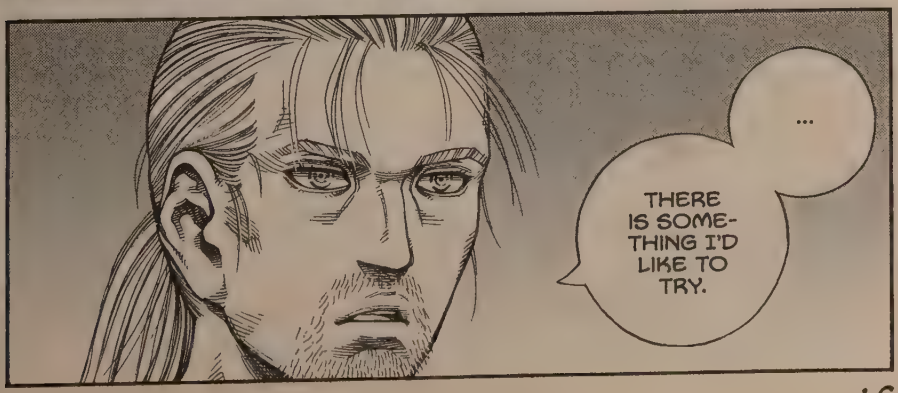

UM, WELL...
IT'S NOTHING VERY SPECIFIC YET.
OH?
WHAT'S THAT?
EINAR, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY...
...
...ABOUT TRYING TO ELIMI-NATE...
...WARFARE AND SLAVERY...
...FROM THE WORLD?


HMM?
UHH...
WOULD YOU GO BACK TO ICELAND?
WHAT ABOUT YOU, THOR-FINN?

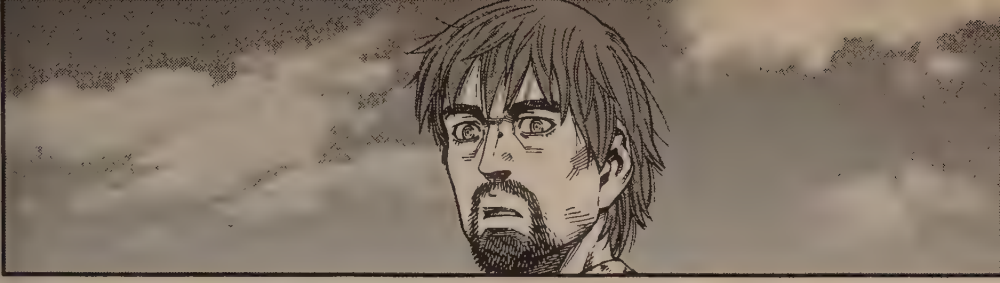
I OUGHT TO GO BACK... FOR A WHILE.
I SUPPOSE...
BACK HOME...

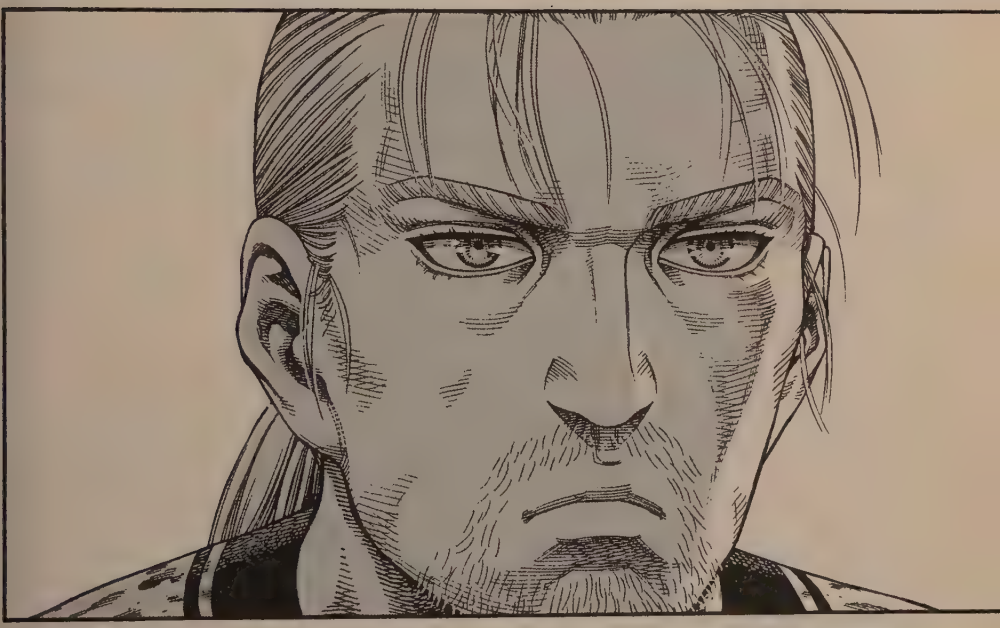
IT'S A STRANGE THING, ISN'T IT?
THE MOMENT FREEDOM IS IN SIGHT, WE'RE BOTH WORRIED AND UNSURE.

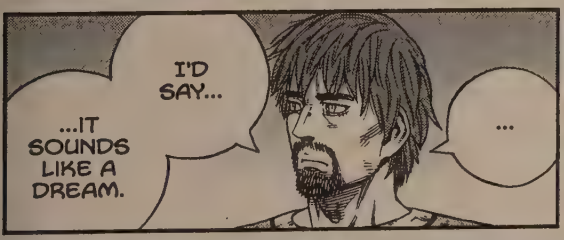

WELL, THAT'S NOT A VERY CONFIDENT ANSWER!
HA
HA
HA
NEITHER WAS YOURS.

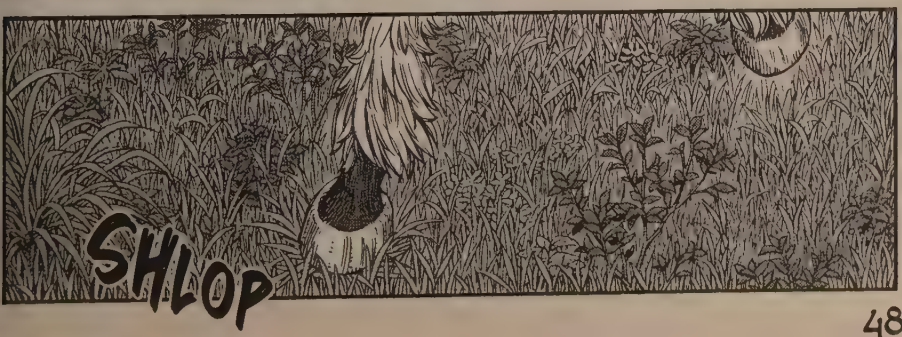

...
THERE IS SOME-THING I'D LIKE TO TRY.

YOU'VE TAKEN DOWN EVERY LAST TREE, THEN.
AHHH!
WELL DONE, YOU TWO.
YES, MASTER.
IF WE HURRY, I THINK WE'LL BE READY.
HOW DOES IT LOOK? WILL YOU HAVE TILLED THE LAND BY PLANTING?






...IT SOUNDS LIKE A DREAM.
I'D SAY...
...


SHLOP

AFTER ALL, WE WON'T MAKE IT OFFICIAL UNTIL I RETURN FROM MY UPCOMING JOURNEY.

ERM, WAIT, TOO EARLY FOR THAT.

KYA-HEE

KYA-HEE

AYE, I SEE.

WELL, HE'S NOT OVER HERE...

MIGHT HAVE BEEN IN HIS FIELDS, THEN...

HAVE YOU SEEN THE OLD MASTER?

AYE.

YOU'RE LEAVING?

OH.

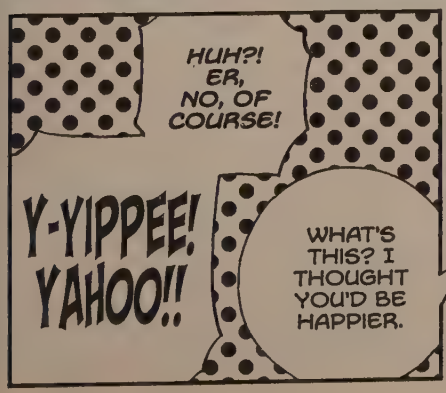
...TELL HIM THAT I HAVE GONE TO THE COURT AT JELLING TO PAY MY RESPECTS TO HIS MAJESTY KING HARALD.

WELL, AT ANY RATE...

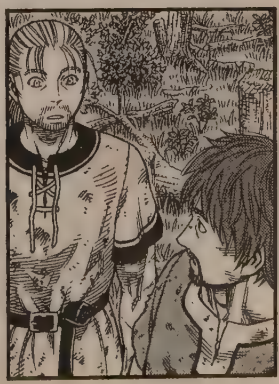
...IF YOU SHOULD SEE HIM...

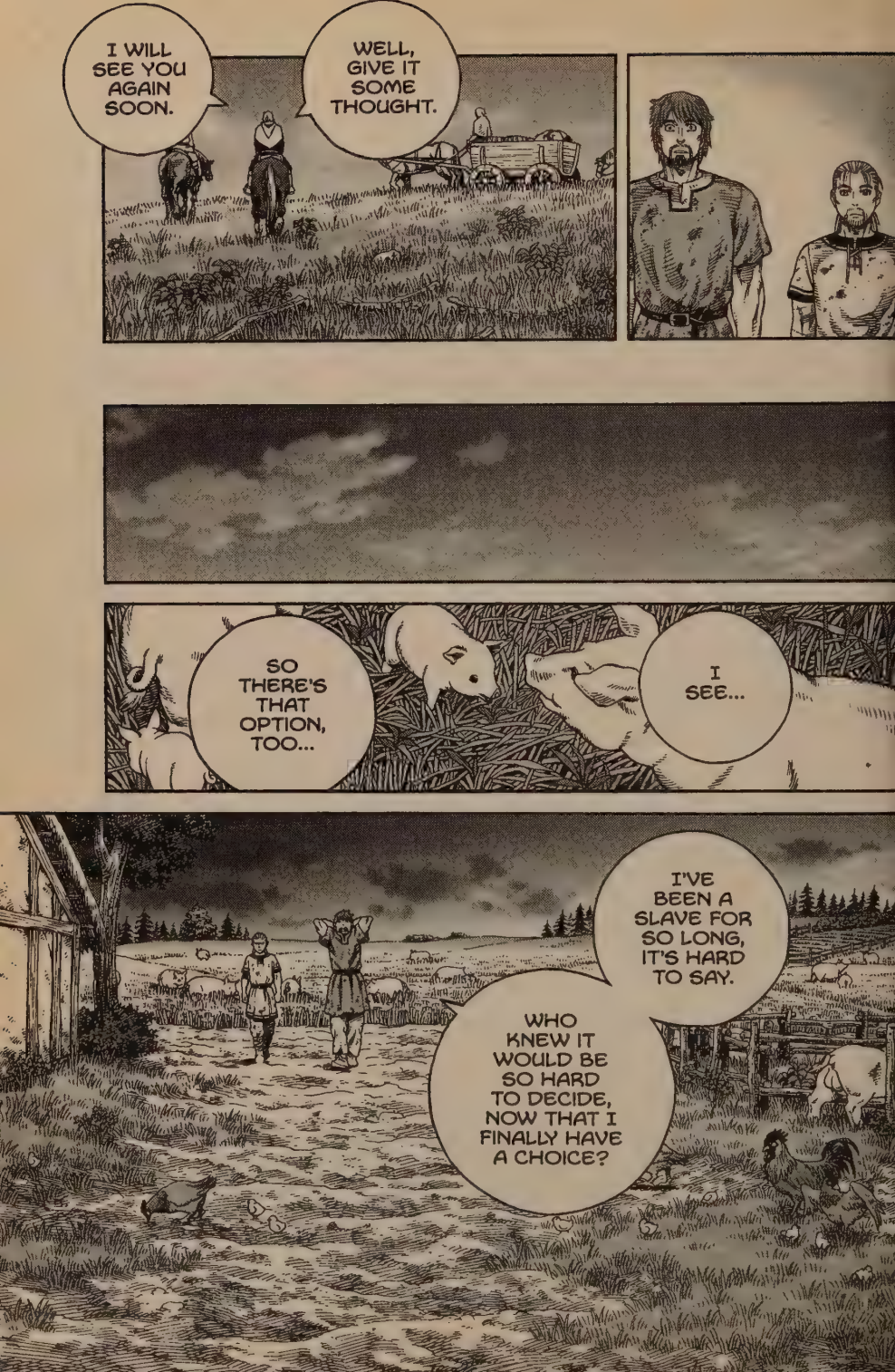
THEN I'LL BE GENER-OUS.
...GOOD.
AYE, AYE, GOOD.

THORFINN, EINAR, YOU'VE WORKED HARD ENOUGH TO EARN IT.
ONCE THE PLANT-ING IS FINISHED ...
...YOU TWO WILL BE FREE.

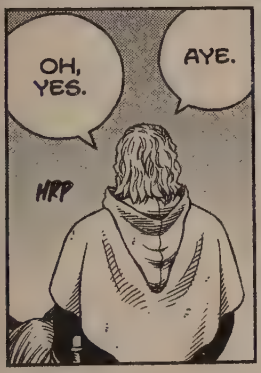

HUH?! ER, NO, OF COURSE!
Y-YIPPEE! YAHOO!!
WHAT'S THIS? I THOUGHT YOU'D BE HAPPIER.

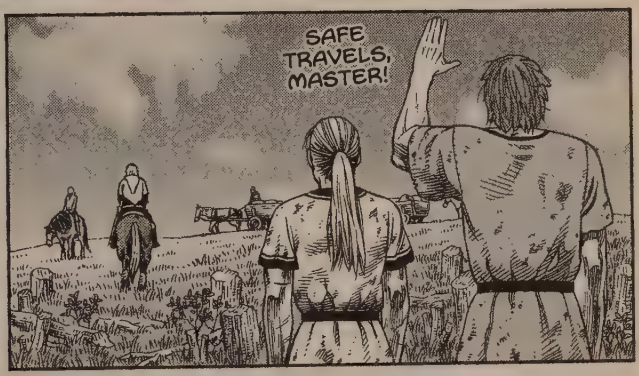
?

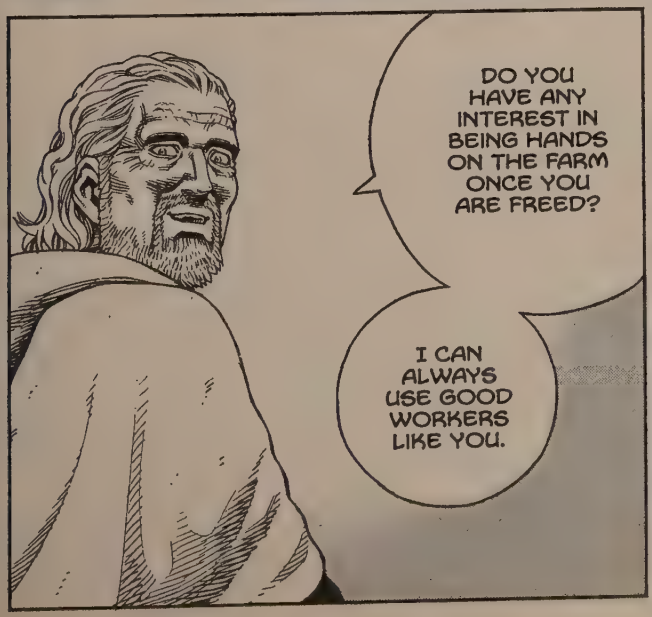



I WILL SEE YOU AGAIN SOON.
WELL, GIVE IT SOME THOUGHT.
SO THERE'S THAT OPTION, TOO...
I SEE...
I'VE BEEN A SLAVE FOR SO LONG, IT'S HARD TO SAY.
WHO KNEW IT WOULD BE SO HARD TO DECIDE, NOW THAT I FINALLY HAVE A CHOICE?

MAKE SURE YOU'VE TILLED THE LAND INTO FIELDS BY THEN.
FWAAA...
BUT I SHOULD BE BACK IN TIME FOR THE PLANTING.


OH, YES.
AYE.
HRP

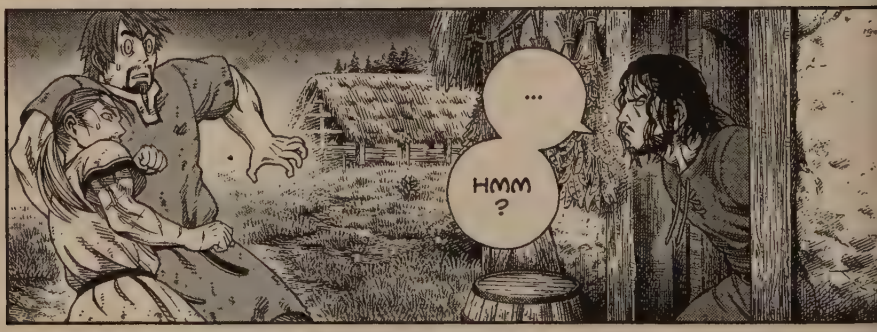

SAFE TRAVELS, MASTER!

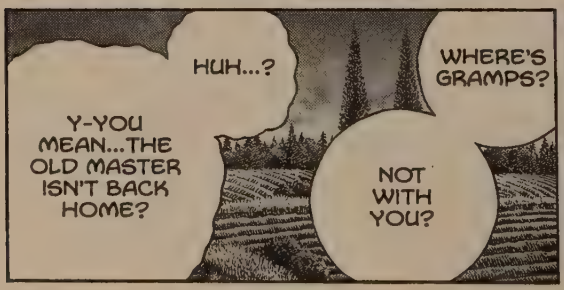

DO YOU HAVE ANY INTEREST IN BEING HANDS ON THE FARM ONCE YOU ARE FREED?
I CAN ALWAYS USE GOOD WORKERS LIKE YOU.

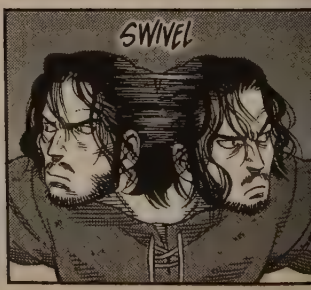
YOU MEN.

WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG, GRAMPS?! ARE YOU TRYING TO KILL ME OVER HERE?!

GAHH

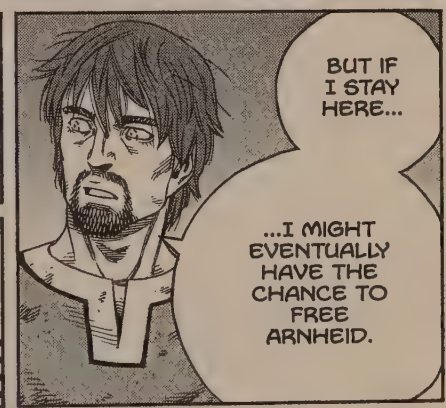


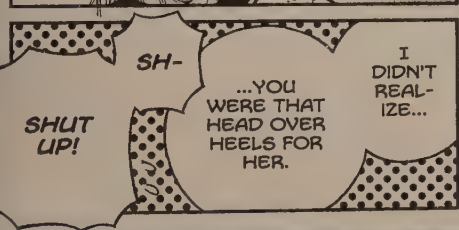


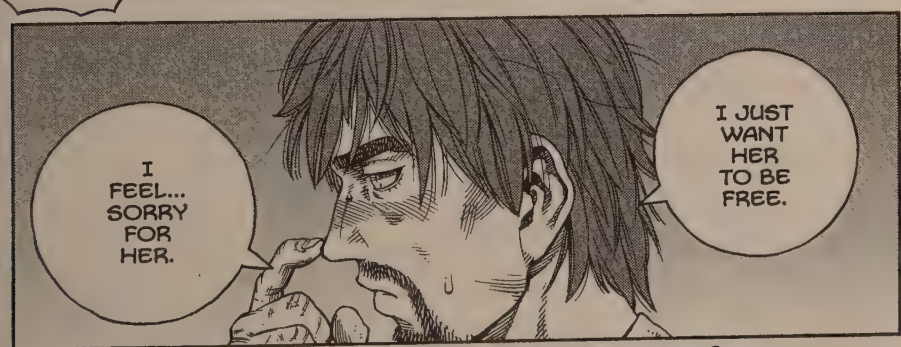


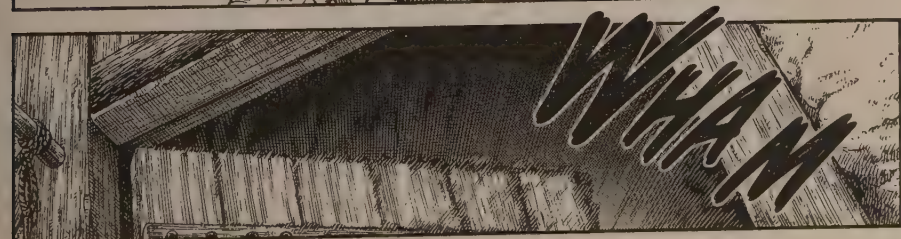
HMM... IT'S TRUE THAT I DON'T GET ALONG WITH THE HANDS, THAT'S FOR CERTAIN.
I'M SURPRISED...
DO YOU THINK YOU COULD REALLY STICK AROUND HERE?

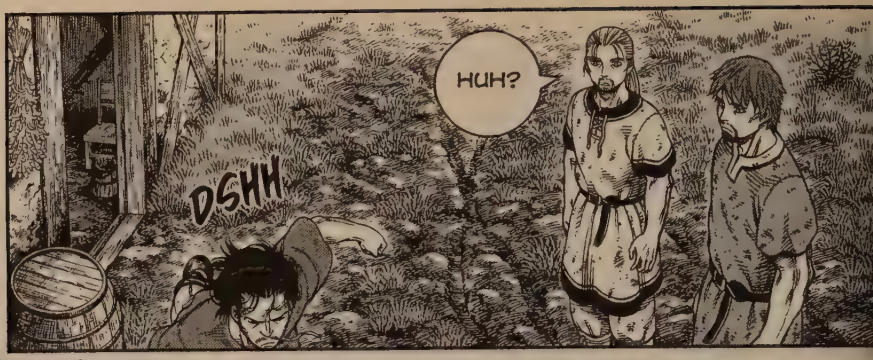
UHHH...
...

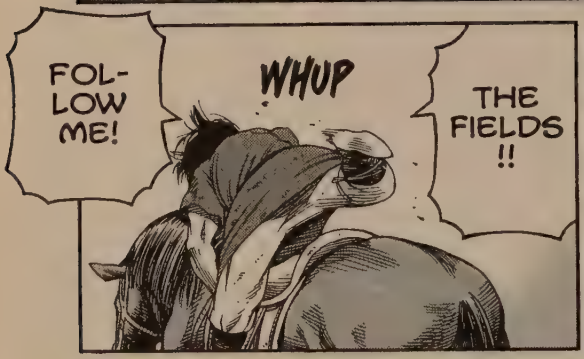

BUT IF I STAY HERE...
...I MIGHT EVENTUALLY HAVE THE CHANCE TO FREE ARNHEID.

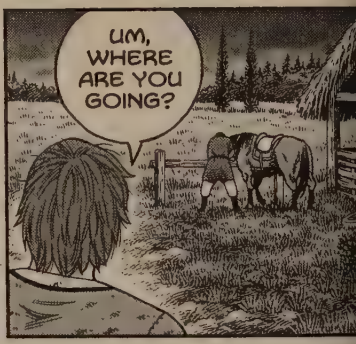

SH-
SHUT UP!
...YOU WERE THAT HEAD OVER HEELS FOR HER.
I DIDN'T REAL-IZE...


I FEEL... SORRY FOR HER.
I JUST WANT HER TO BE FREE.

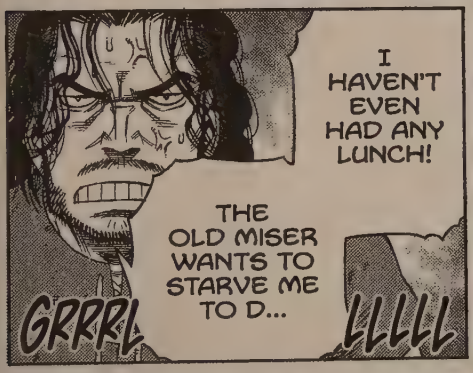

WHAM

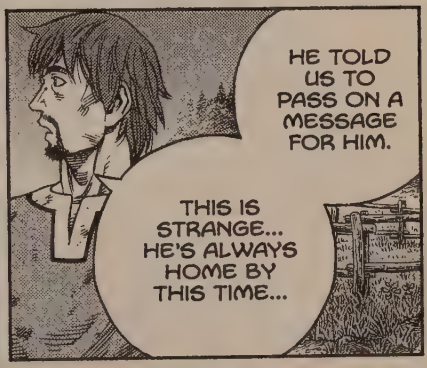

HUH?
DSHH

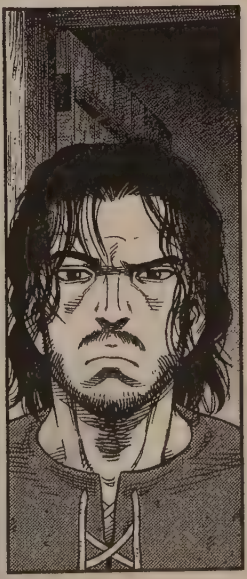

FOL-
LOW
ME!
WHUP
THE
FIELDS
!!


UM,
WHERE
ARE YOU
GOING?

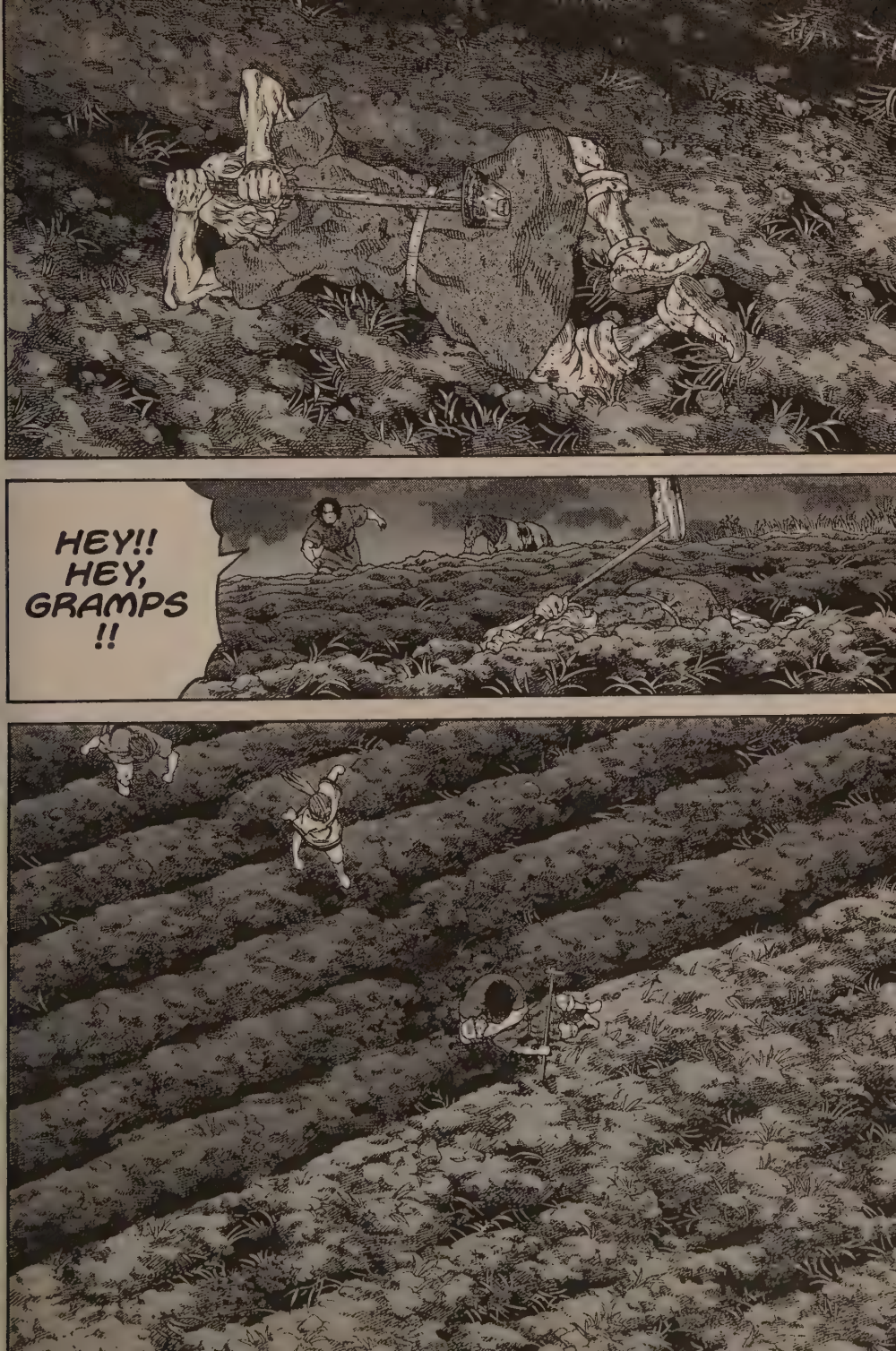
THE MASTER WAS SEARCHING FOR HIM AS WELL...
GLURRGLE
LEFT FOR THE FIELDS THIS MORNING AND HASN'T BEEN BACK SINCE.
DOESN'T HE KNOW IT'S NEARLY DINNER-TIME?!


I HAVEN'T EVEN HAD ANY LUNCH!
THE OLD MISER WANTS TO STARVE ME TO D...
GRRRL
LLLLL

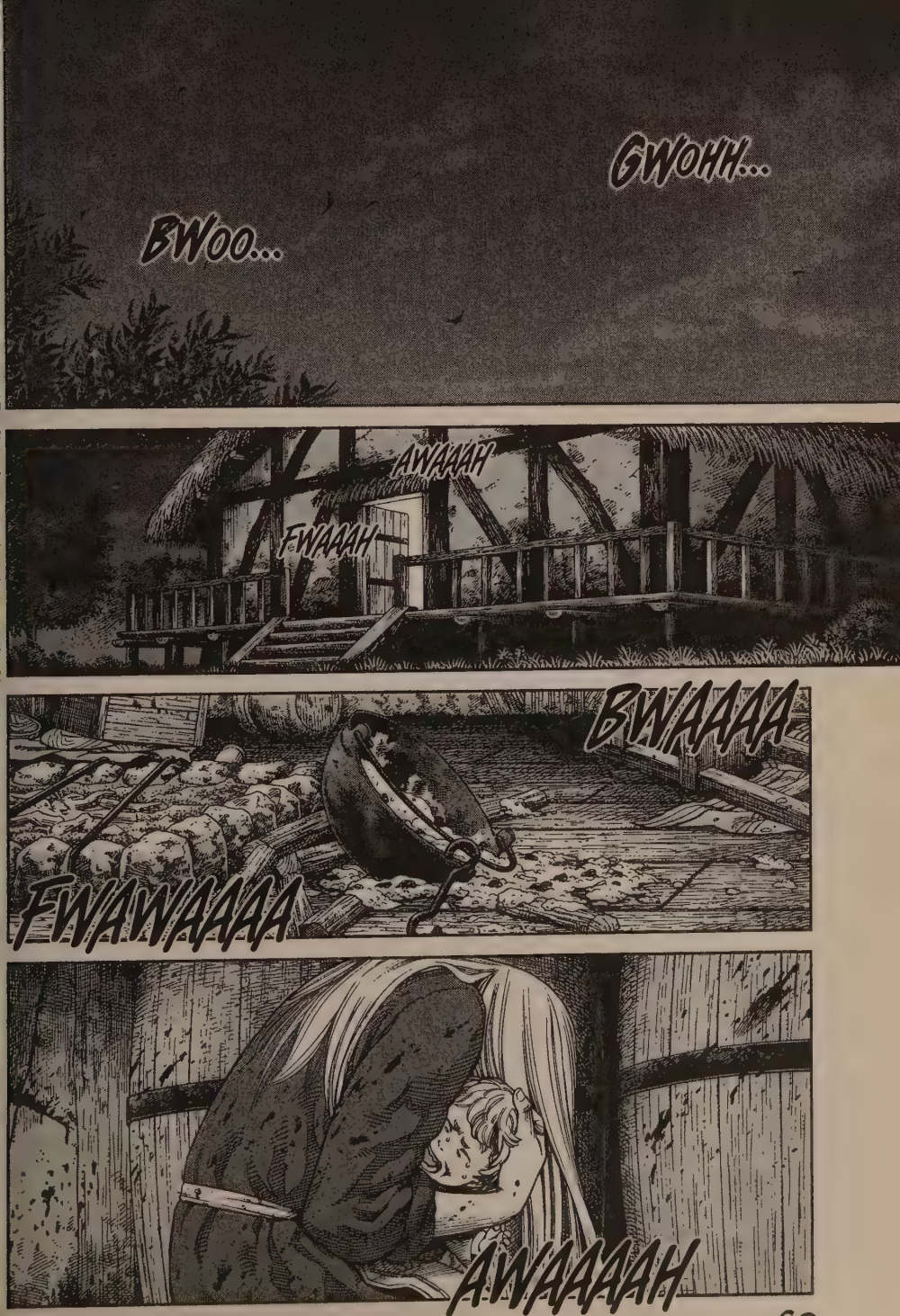

HE TOLD US TO PASS ON A MESSAGE FOR HIM.
THIS IS STRANGE... HE'S ALWAYS HOME BY THIS TIME...



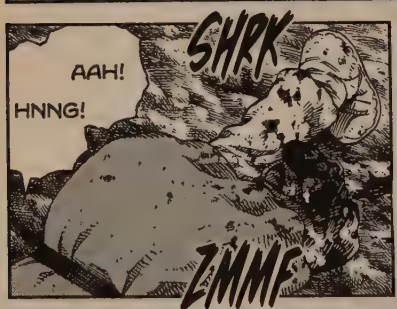
CHAPTER 74: ESCAPED SLAVE


HEY!! HEY, GRAMPS !!

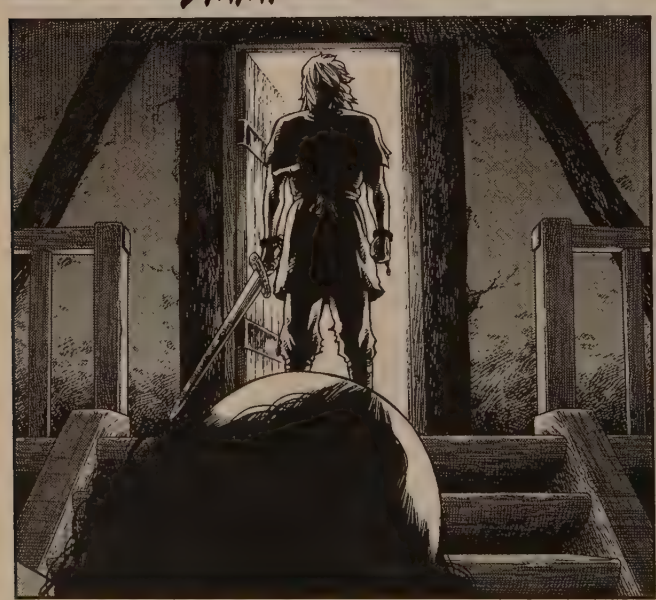
AWAAAA
FWAAAHH
SNAP...
BZT
POP
PIP POP
AWAAAAAH
FWUMM...
WAAAAH
WHEEZE
HUFF
HUFF

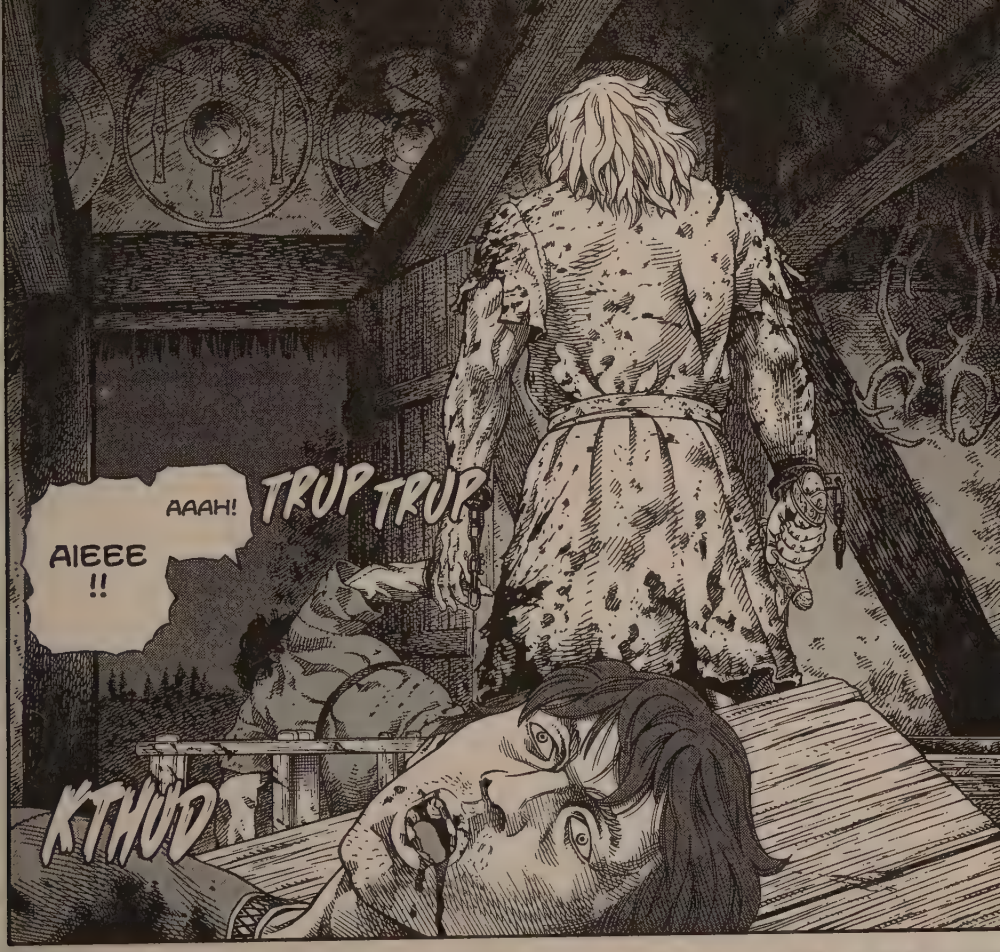

GWOHH...
BWOO...
AWAAAH
FWAAAH
BWAAAA
FWAWAAAA
AWAAAAH

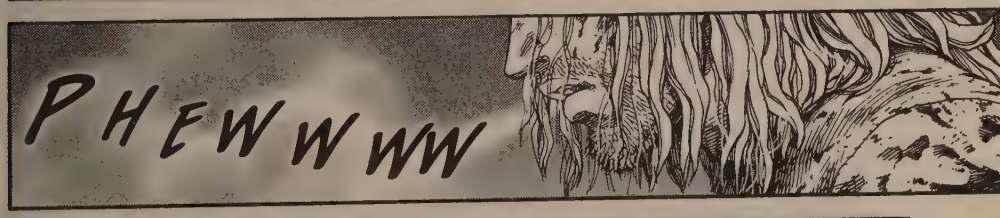
BAM
DN'T
THWUMP
HAAH!
URMP!

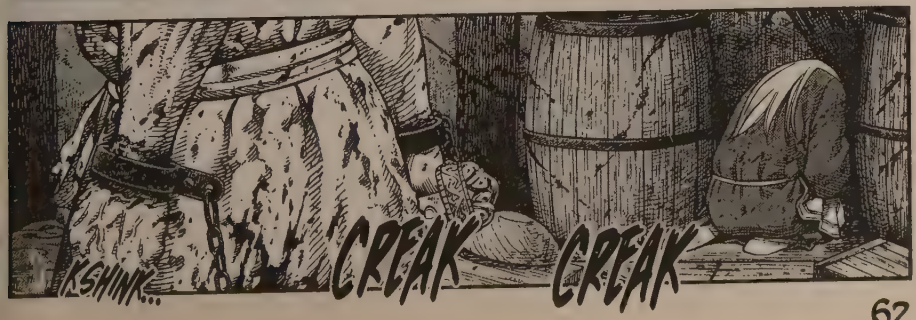

SHRK
AAH!
HNNG!
ZMMF

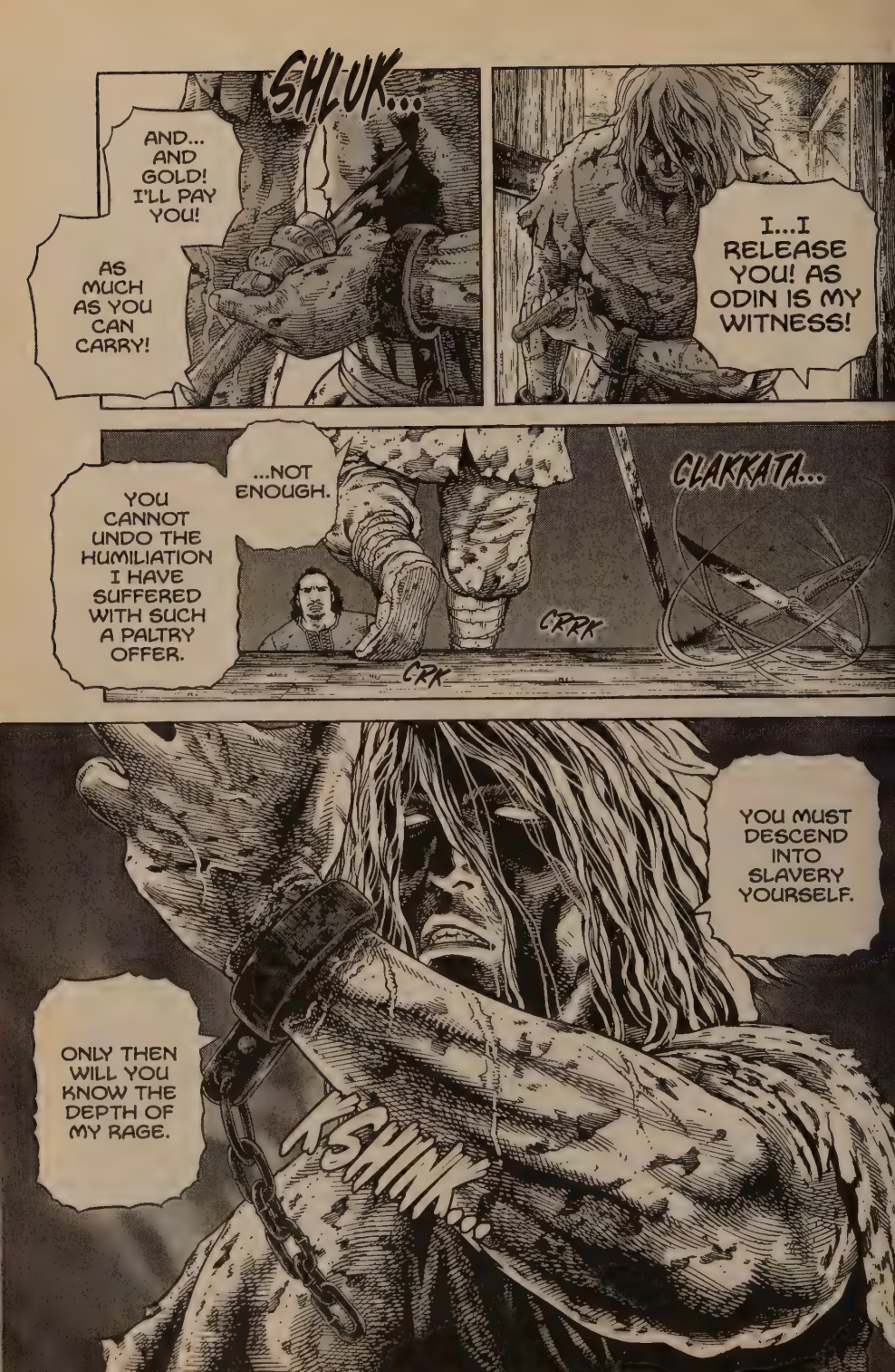
HYAA!
AIEE!



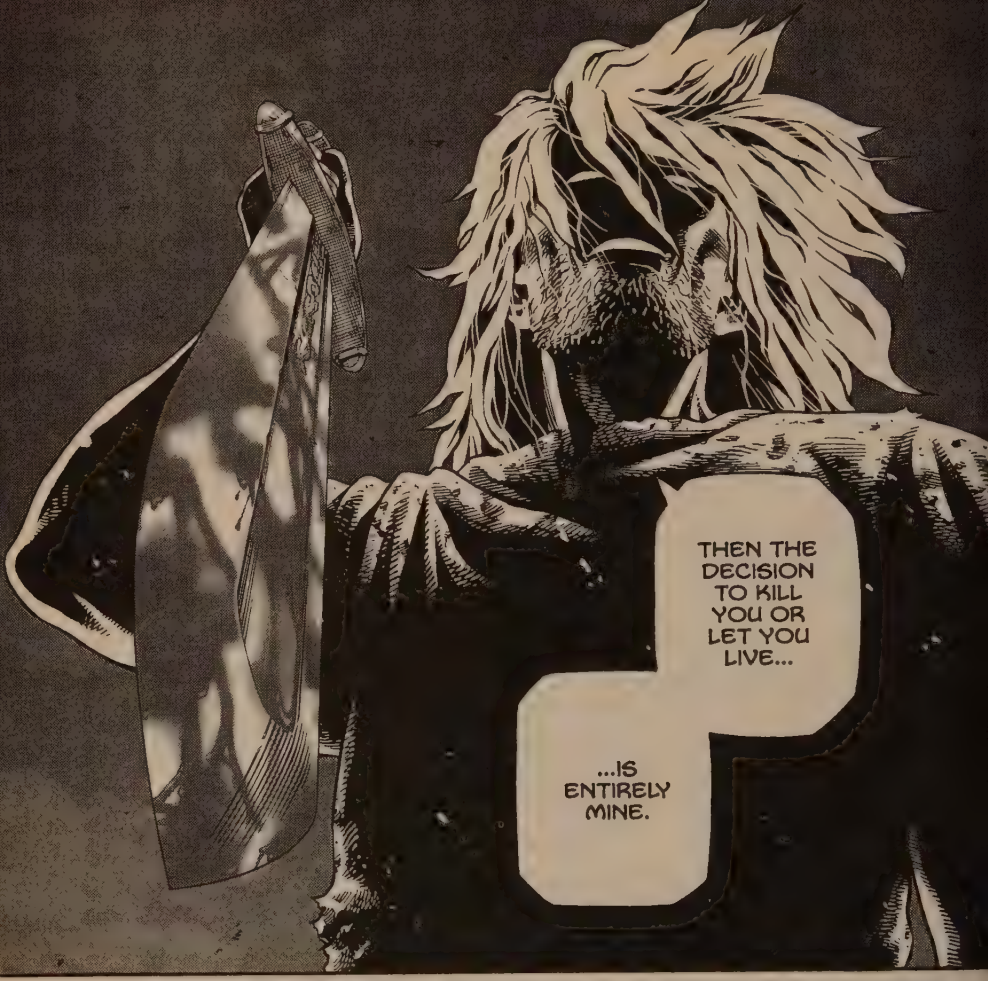

AAAH!
TRUP TRUP
AIEEE !!
KTHUD


PHEWWW

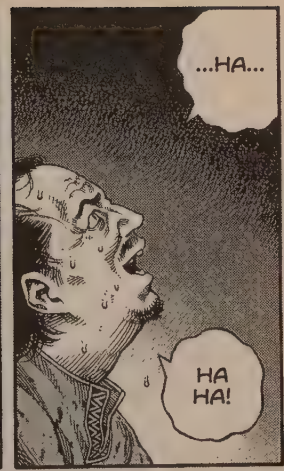

KSHINK...
CREAK
CREAK

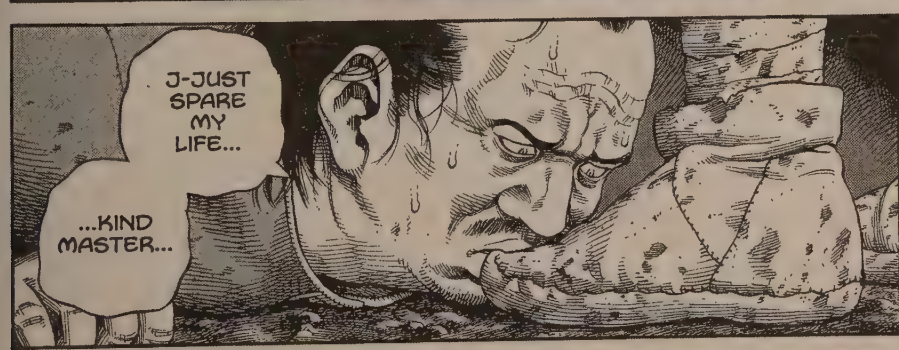

SHLUK...
AND... AND GOLD! I'LL PAY YOU!
AS MUCH AS YOU CAN CARRY!
I...I RELEASE YOU! AS ODIN IS MY WITNESS!
YOU CANNOT UNDO THE HUMILIATION I HAVE SUFFERED WITH SUCH A PALTRY OFFER.
...NOT ENOUGH.
CRK
CRRK
CLAKKATA...
YOU MUST DESCEND INTO SLAVERY YOURSELF.
ONLY THEN WILL YOU KNOW THE DEPTH OF MY RAGE.
SHINK...

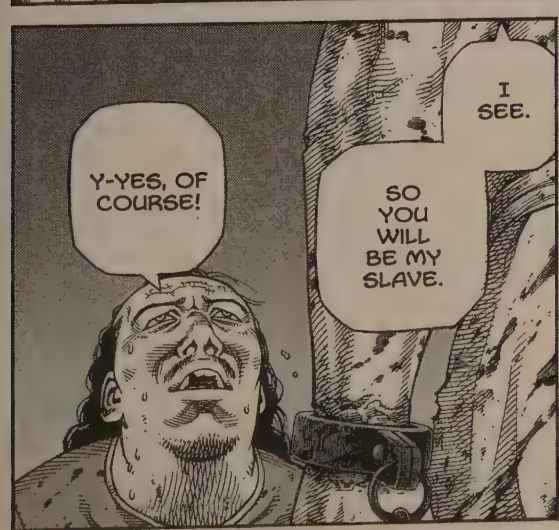
I'M SORRY!! I WAS WRONG!!
I-I APOLOGIZE FOR EVERYTHING!! JUST SPARE MY LIFE!!
...
I-

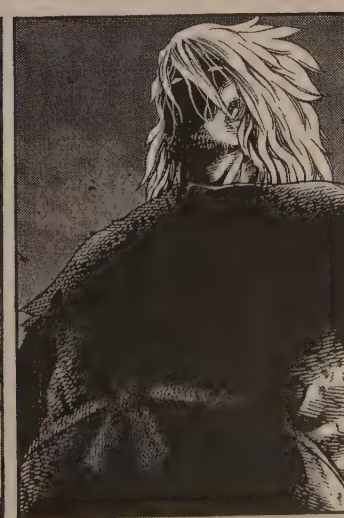

THEN THE DECISION TO KILL YOU OR LET YOU LIVE...
...IS ENTIRELY MINE.

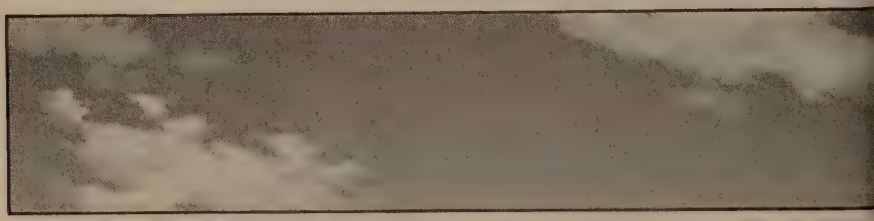
O-OF COURSE! I WILL BE YOUR SLAVE!
I WILL SERVE YOU! FROM NOW ON, YOU ARE THE MASTER AND I AM THE SLAVE!
ZRUP
ZRUP


...HA...
HA HA!

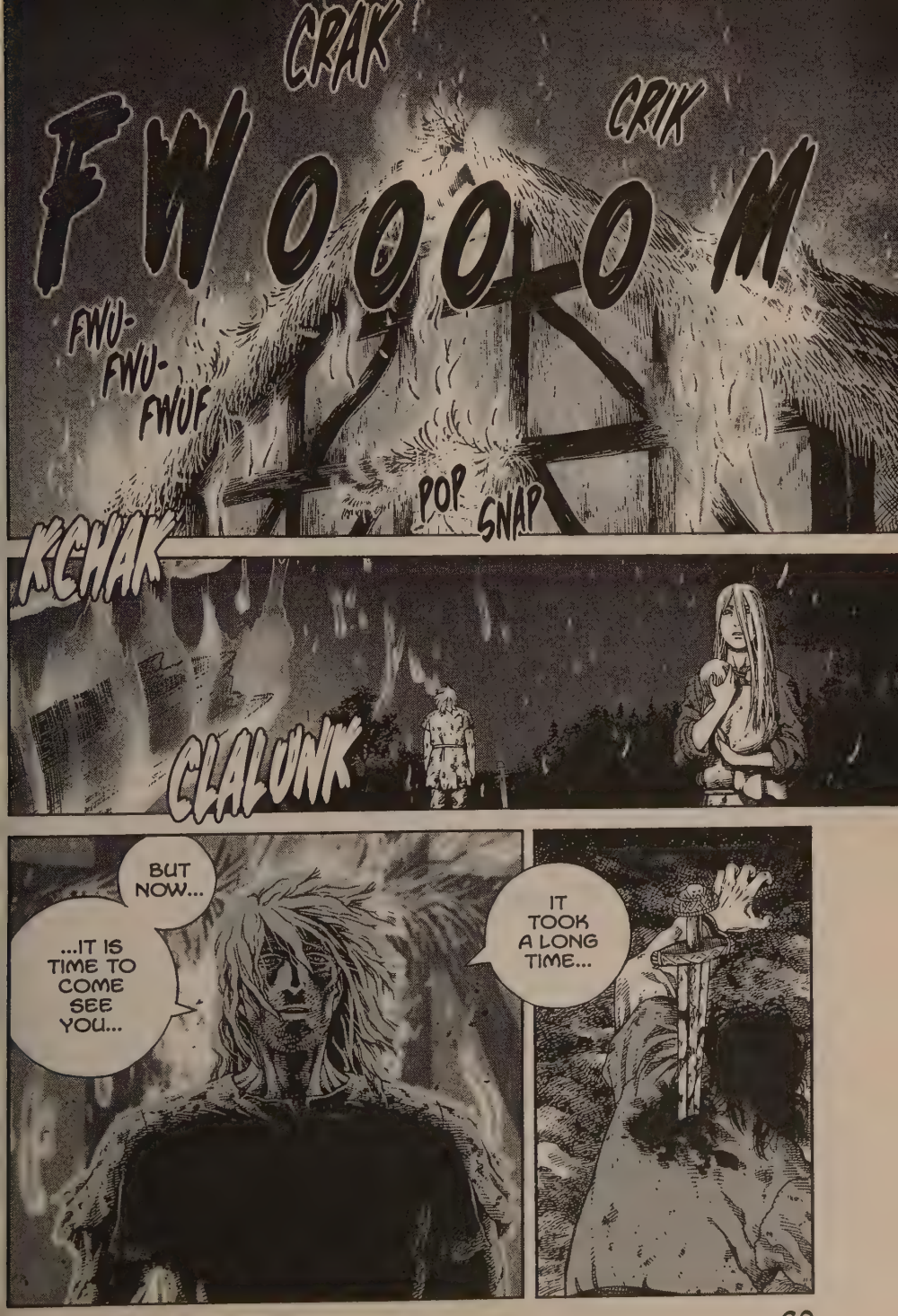

J-JUST SPARE MY LIFE...
...KIND MASTER...

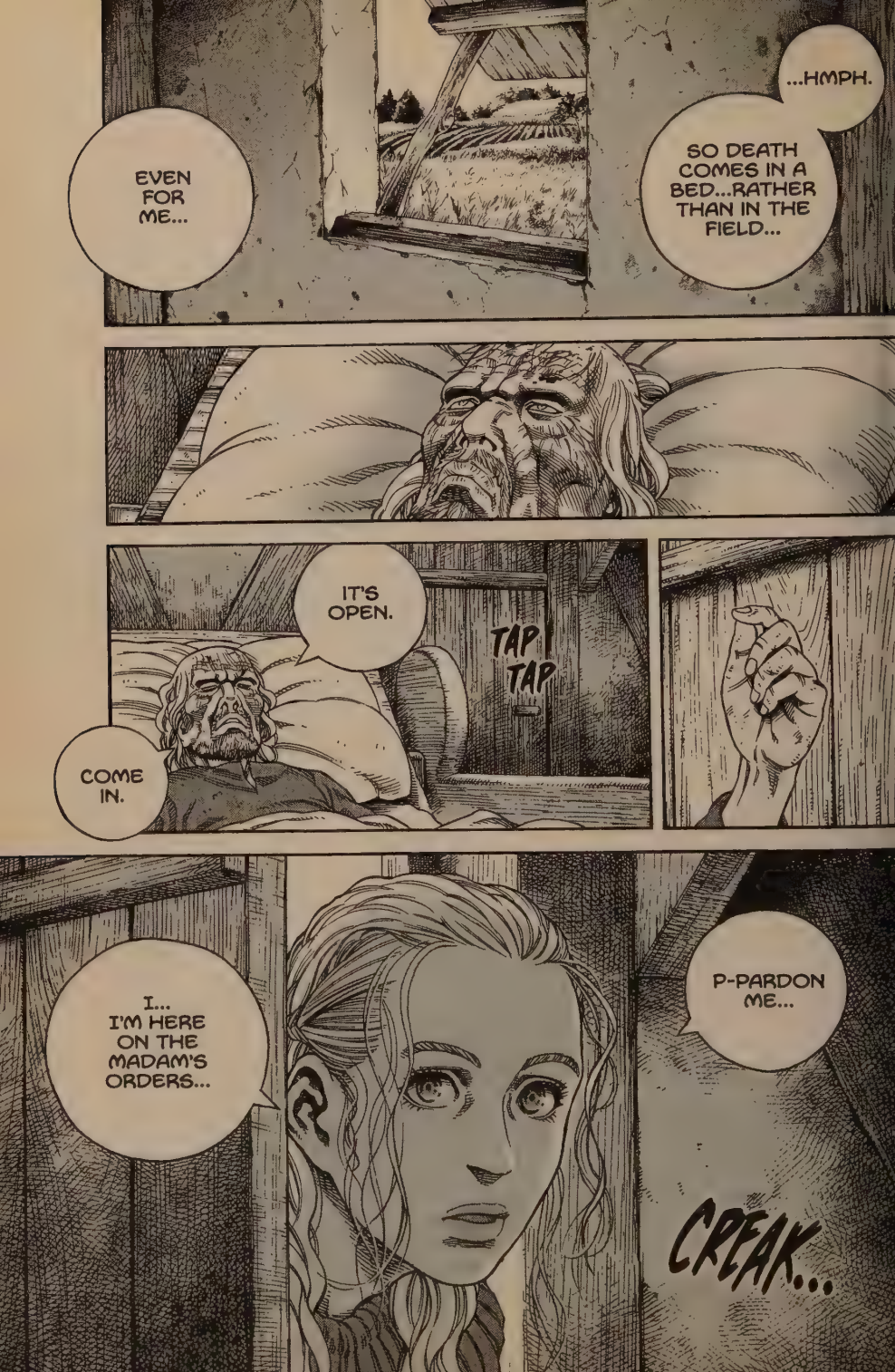

I SEE.
SO YOU WILL BE MY SLAVE.
Y-YES, OF COURSE!

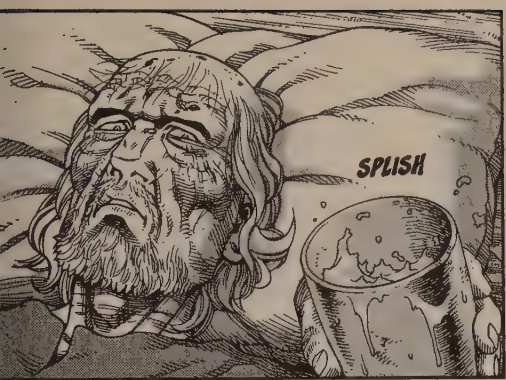


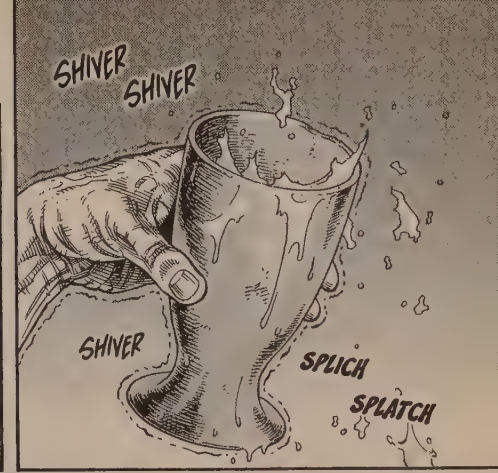


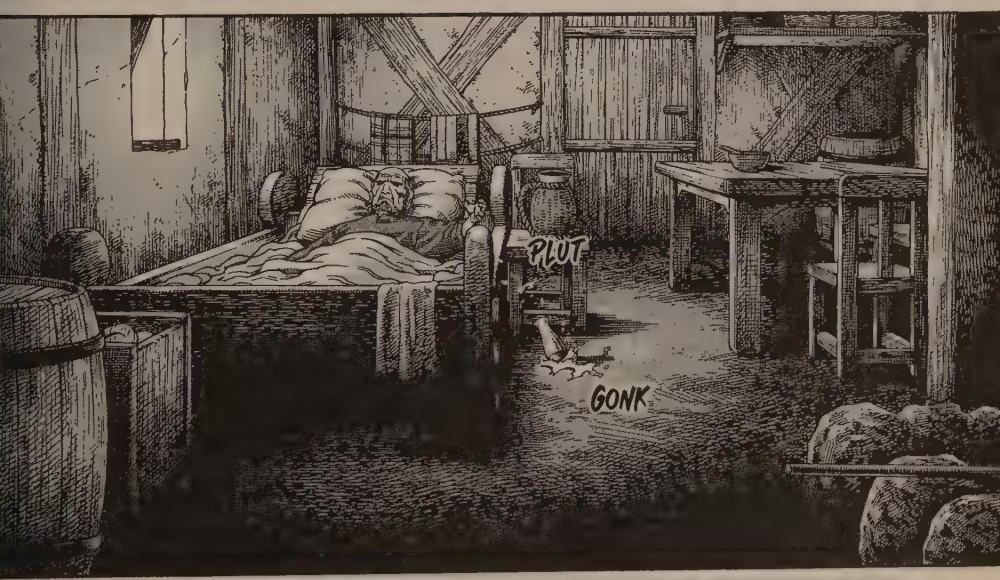
PIP PIP...
CHIT CHIT...

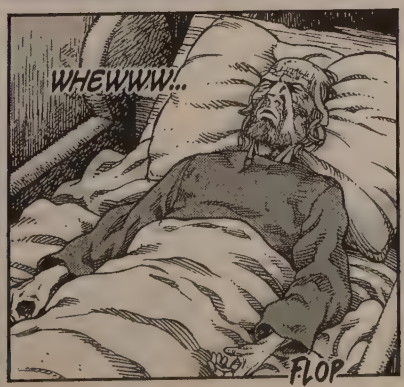

CRAK
CRIK
FWOOOOM
FWU-
FWU-
FWUF
POP
SNAP
KCHAK
CLALUNK
BUT NOW...
...IT IS TIME TO COME SEE YOU...
IT TOOK A LONG TIME...

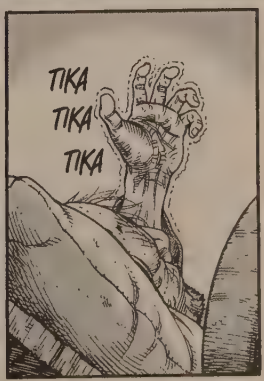

EVEN FOR ME...
...HMPH.
SO DEATH COMES IN A BED...RATHER THAN IN THE FIELD...
IT'S OPEN.
TAP TAP
COME IN.
I... I'M HERE ON THE MADAM'S ORDERS...
P-PARDON ME...
CREAK...

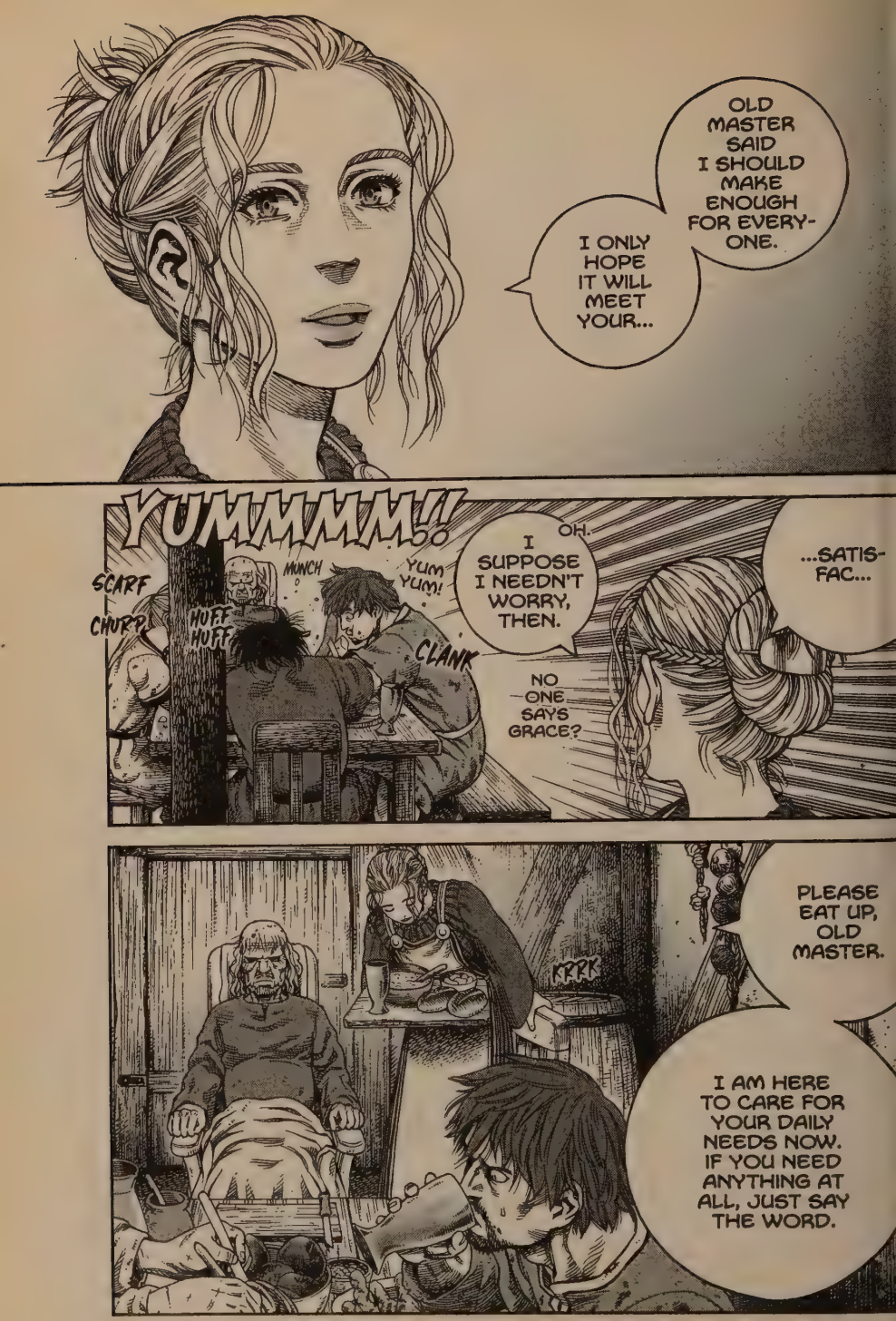

SPLISH


SHIVER
SHIVER
SHIVER
SPLICH
SPLATCH


PLUT
GONK

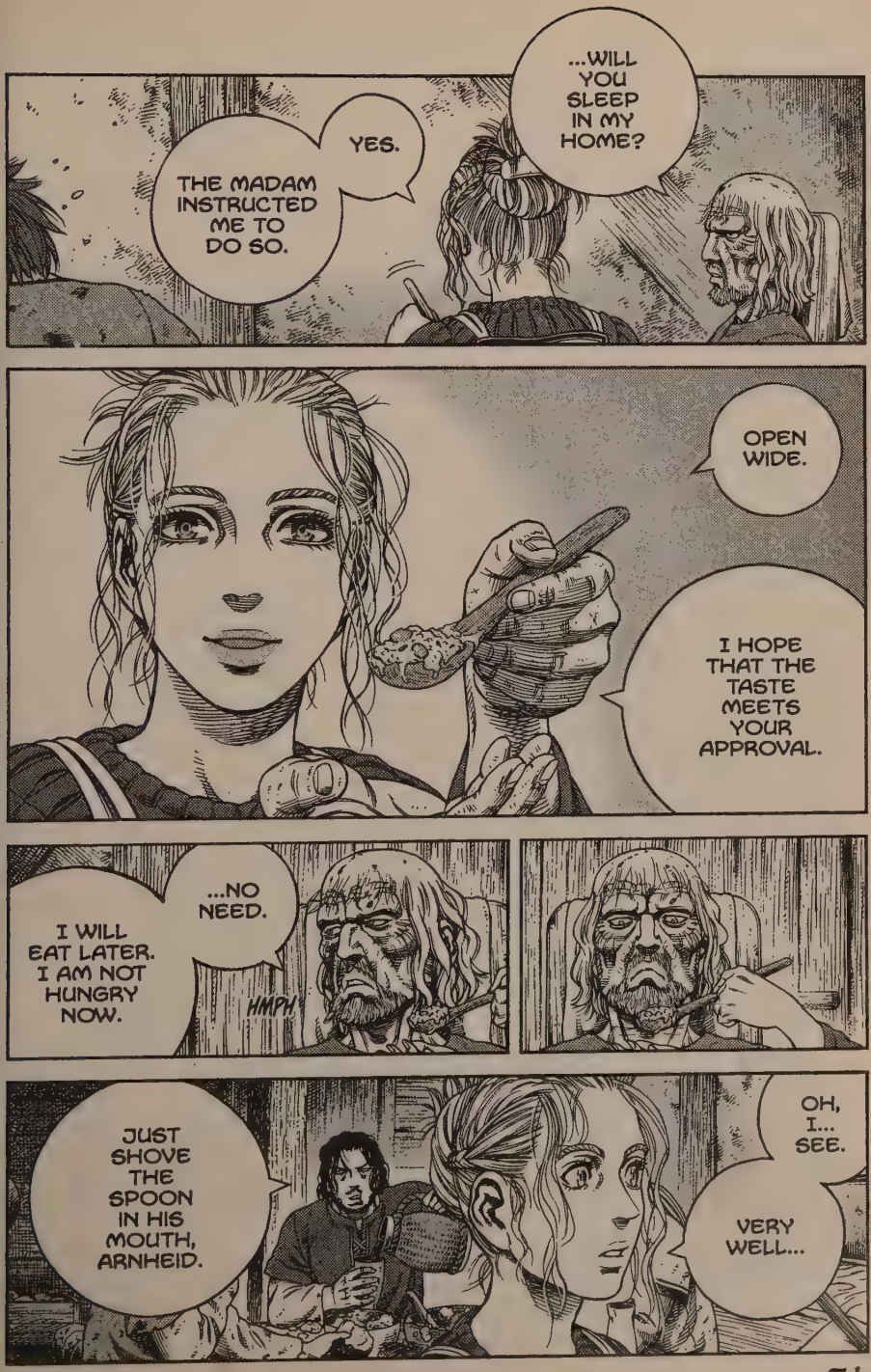

WHEWWW!..
FLOP

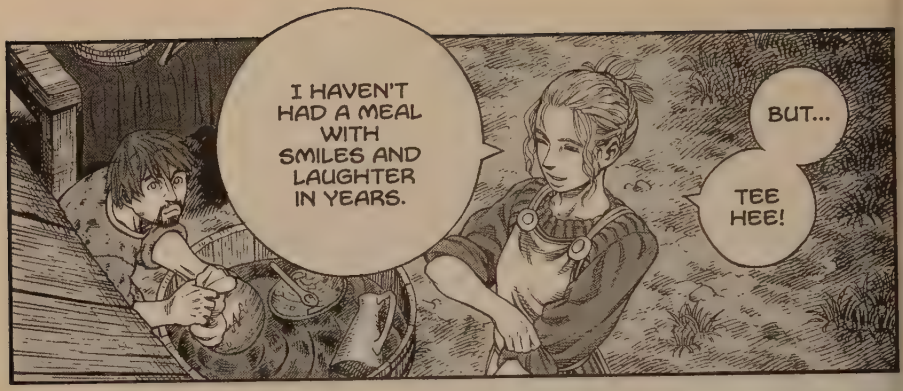

TIKA
TIKA
TIKA


OLD MASTER SAID I SHOULD MAKE ENOUGH FOR EVERY-ONE.
I ONLY HOPE IT WILL MEET YOUR...
YUMMMM!!
SCARF
CHURP!
HUFF HUFF
MUNCH
YUM YUM!
CLANK
OH. I SUPPOSE I NEEDN'T WORRY, THEN.
NO ONE SAYS GRACE?
...SATIS-FAC...
KRRK
PLEASE EAT UP, OLD MASTER.
I AM HERE TO CARE FOR YOUR DAILY NEEDS NOW. IF YOU NEED ANYTHING AT ALL, JUST SAY THE WORD.

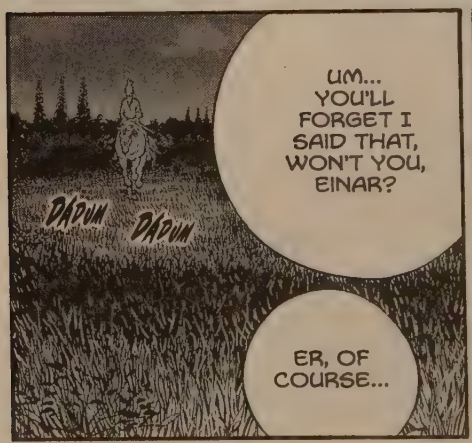
...NO WAY...
IS IT, ARNHEID ?!
IS...IS SOME OF THIS OURS, TOO?!
YES, OF COURSE.

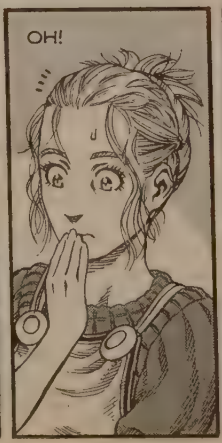
GET USED TO IT, GRAMPS. UNTIL YOUR BODY RECOVERS, "OPEN WIDE! ♡" IS ALL YOU GET.
SMIRK
THE OLD MAN'S TOO EMBARRASSED TO OPEN HIS MOUTH FOR HIS FOOD.
AH!
N-NO...
DID YOU JUST LAUGH?
HEH...
...!
BWEET
GUH...
IT'S TRUE, I'M NOT HUNGRY AT THE MOMENT.
LATER, WHEN I FEEL...
GYUUURGLE
GET OUT OF MY HOUSE ALREADY!!
AHA HA HA HA HA HA!
THAT'S IT! I CAN'T HOLD IT IN ANY LONGER!
BWA HA HA HA!

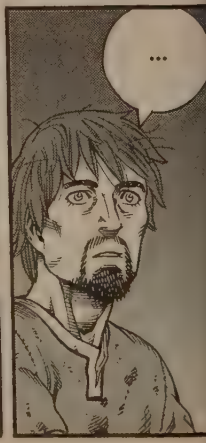

...WILL YOU SLEEP IN MY HOME?
YES.
THE MADAM INSTRUCTED ME TO DO SO.
OPEN WIDE.
I HOPE THAT THE TASTE MEETS YOUR APPROVAL.
...NO NEED.
I WILL EAT LATER. I AM NOT HUNGRY NOW.
HMPH
OH, I... SEE.
VERY WELL...
JUST SHOVE THE SPOON IN HIS MOUTH, ARNHEID.

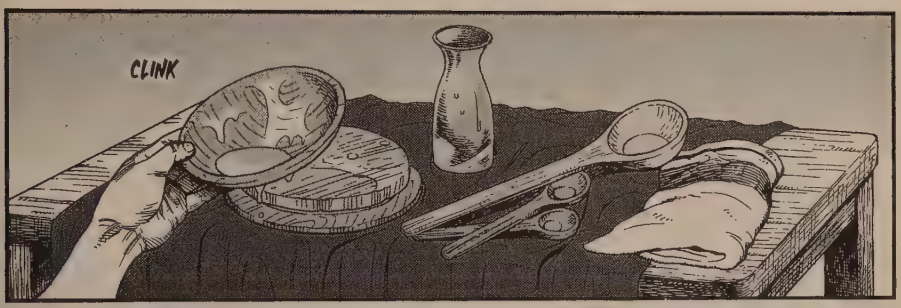

I HAVEN'T HAD A MEAL WITH SMILES AND LAUGHTER IN YEARS.
BUT...
TEE HEE!

IT'S ALMOST LIKE BACK WHEN I USED TO BE FREE...

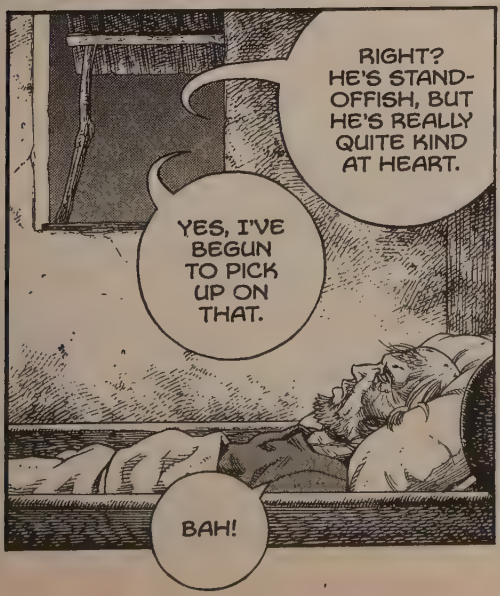

DADUM DADUM
UM... YOU'LL FORGET I SAID THAT, WON'T YOU, EINAR?
ER, OF COURSE...

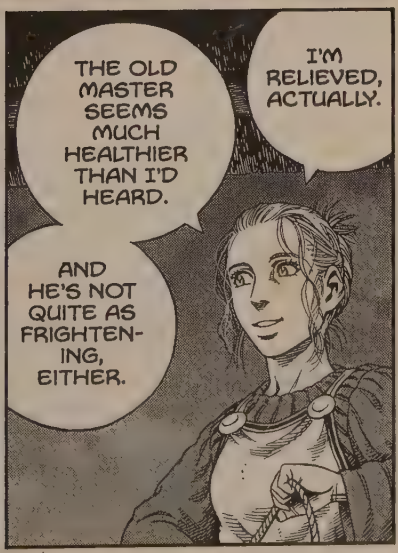

OH!


...

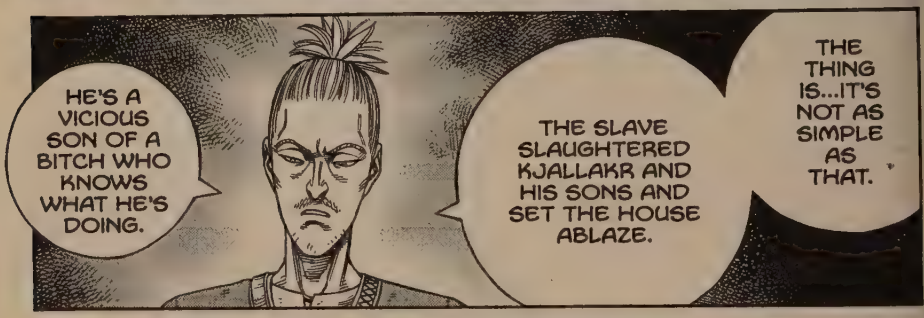

CLINK

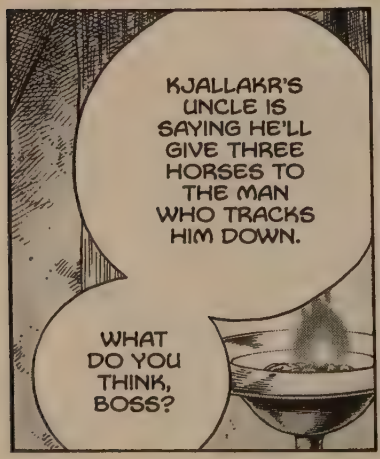
OH, JUST LEAVE THAT.
I'LL WASH ALL THE DISHES.
IT WAS TRULY DELICIOUS.
THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR THE MEAL.


RIGHT? HE'S STAND-OFFISH, BUT HE'S REALLY QUITE KIND AT HEART.
YES, I'VE BEGUN TO PICK UP ON THAT.
BAH!


THE OLD MASTER SEEMS MUCH HEALTHIER THAN I'D HEARD.
I'M RELIEVED, ACTUALLY.
AND HE'S NOT QUITE AS FRIGHTEN-ING, EITHER.

HE NEVER KNEW HOW TO MANAGE HIS SLAVES PROPERLY.
AHH, KJALLAKR'S PLACE?
YES, FROM KJALLAKR'S FARM.
ABOUT THREE DAYS AGO.
GOT WHAT HE DESERVED.

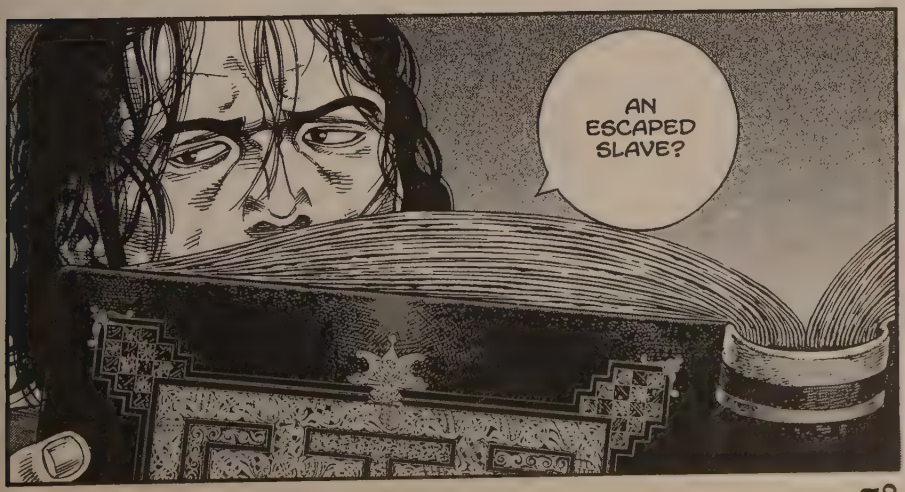

HE'S A VICIOUS SON OF A BITCH WHO KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING.
THE SLAVE SLAUGHTERED KJALLAKR AND HIS SONS AND SET THE HOUSE ABLAZE.
THE THING IS...IT'S NOT AS SIMPLE AS THAT.


KJALLAKR'S UNCLE IS SAYING HE'LL GIVE THREE HORSES TO THE MAN WHO TRACKS HIM DOWN.
WHAT DO YOU THINK, BOSS?

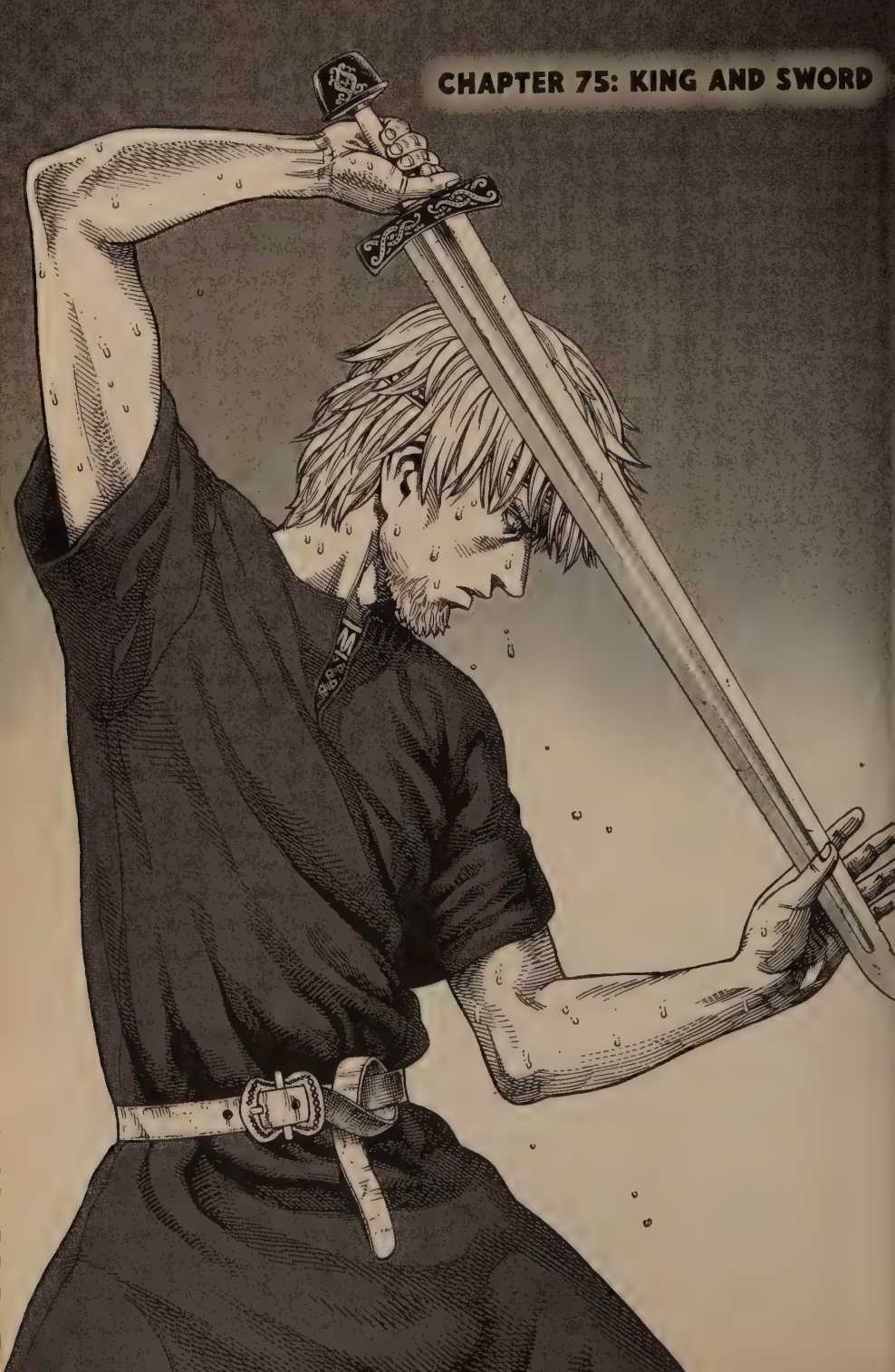
...
FUMP

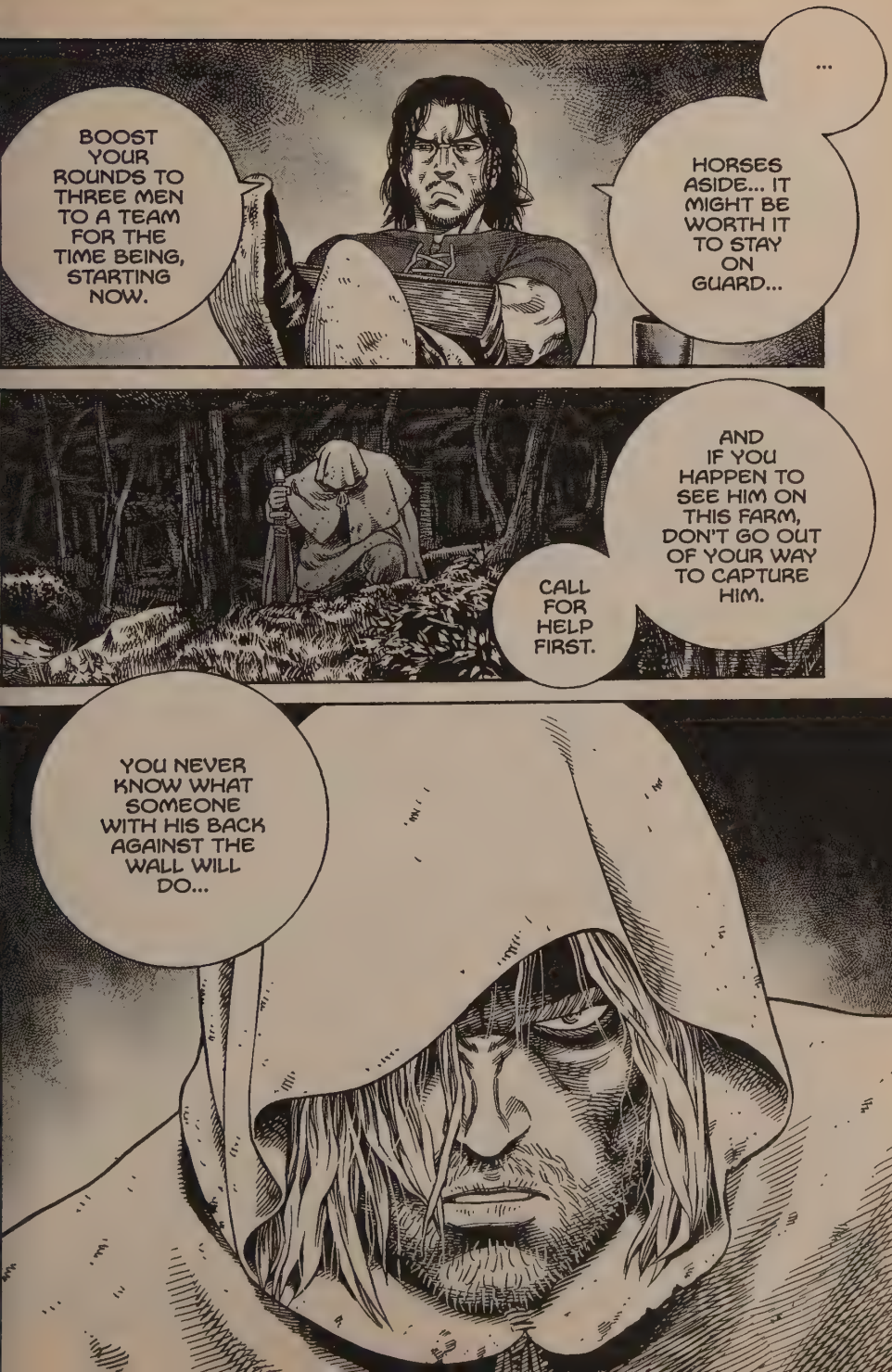
KA-
CLOP...

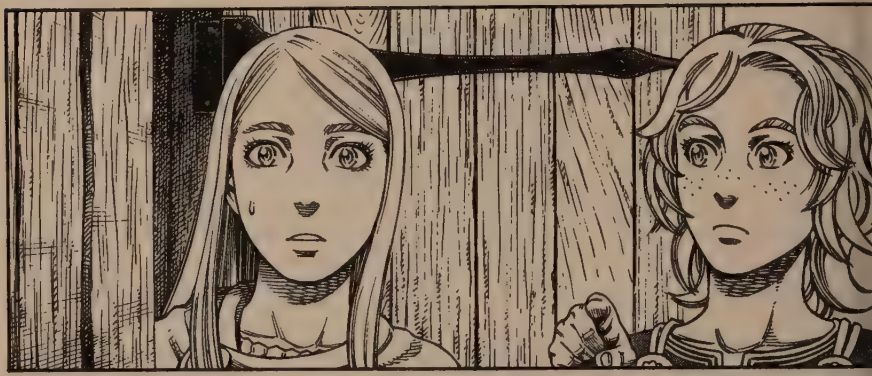
HEY, SLAVES! HAVE YOU SEEN SNAKE?


AN ESCAPED SLAVE?

CHAPTER 75: KING AND SWORD




BOOST YOUR ROUNDS TO THREE MEN TO A TEAM FOR THE TIME BEING, STARTING NOW.
...
HORSES ASIDE... IT MIGHT BE WORTH IT TO STAY ON GUARD...
AND IF YOU HAPPEN TO SEE HIM ON THIS FARM, DON'T GO OUT OF YOUR WAY TO CAPTURE HIM.
CALL FOR HELP FIRST.
YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT SOMEONE WITH HIS BACK AGAINST THE WALL WILL DO...



CLAAANG

TANG

...OH, MY...

YOU'RE RIGHT... THAT'S MY BROTHER CANUTE, ALL RIGHT...

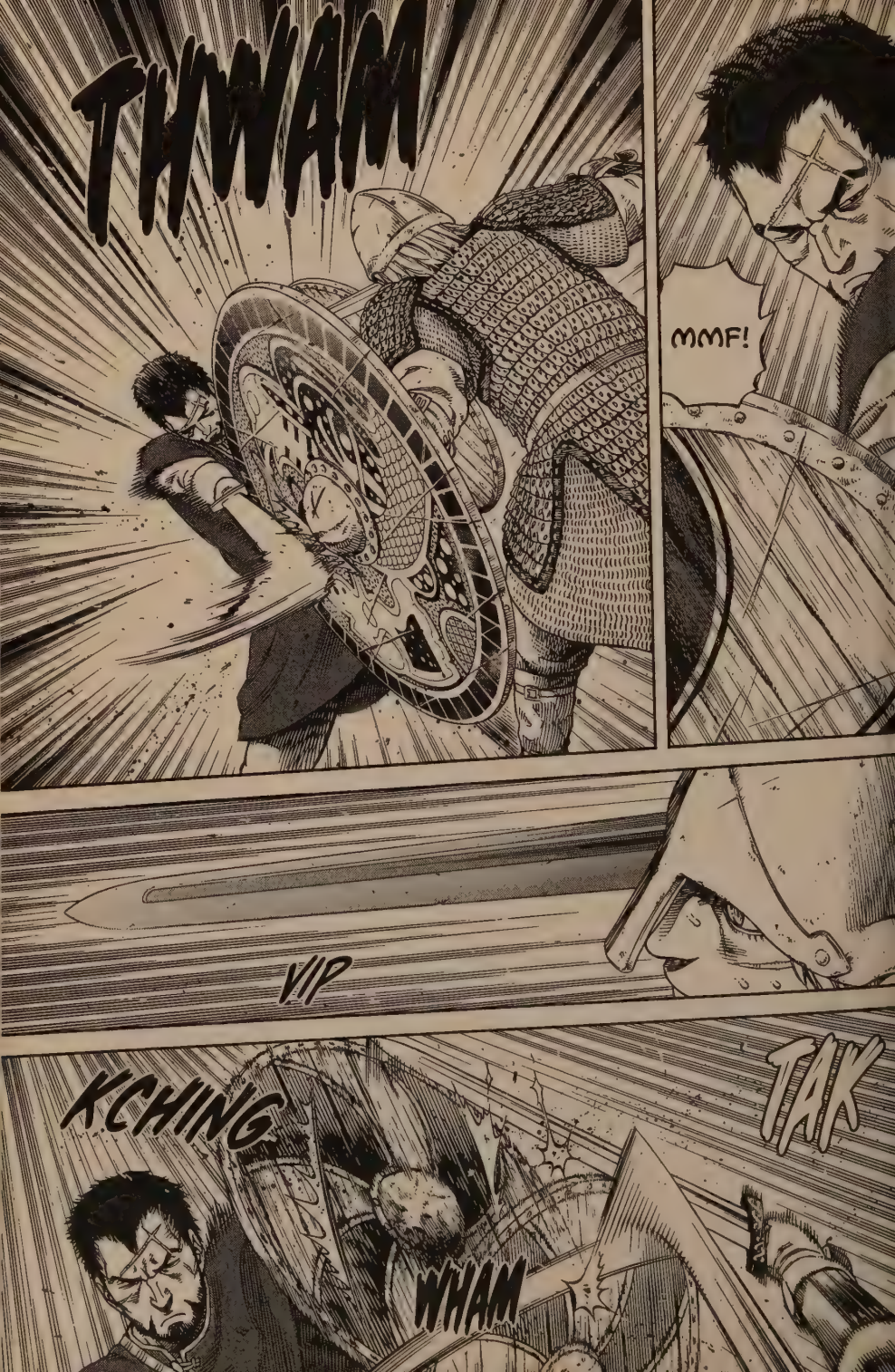
KING HARALD'S
RESIDENCE
JELLING, JUTLAND
PENINSULA, DENMARK
OCTOBER 1018

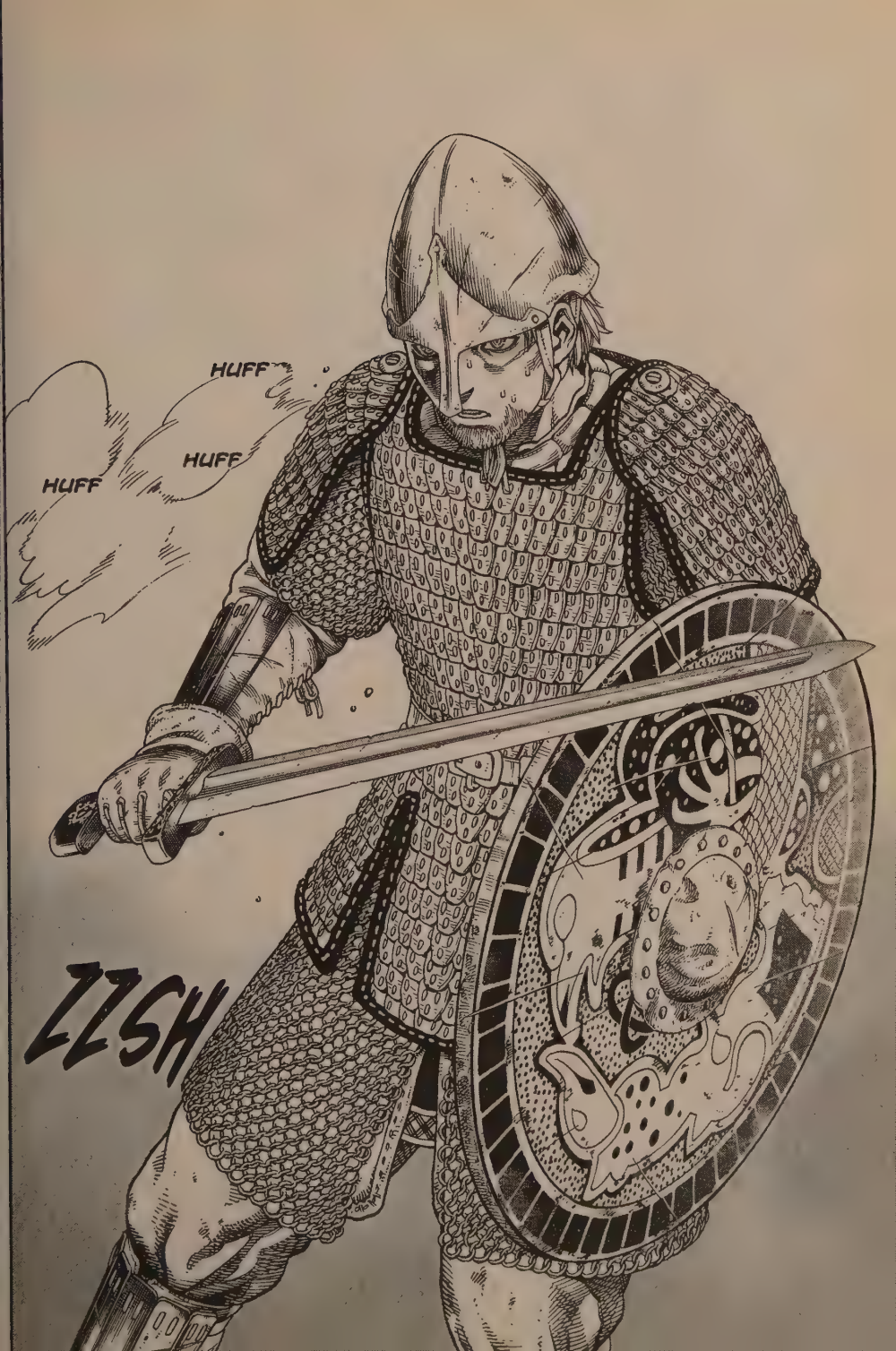
KLAAANG

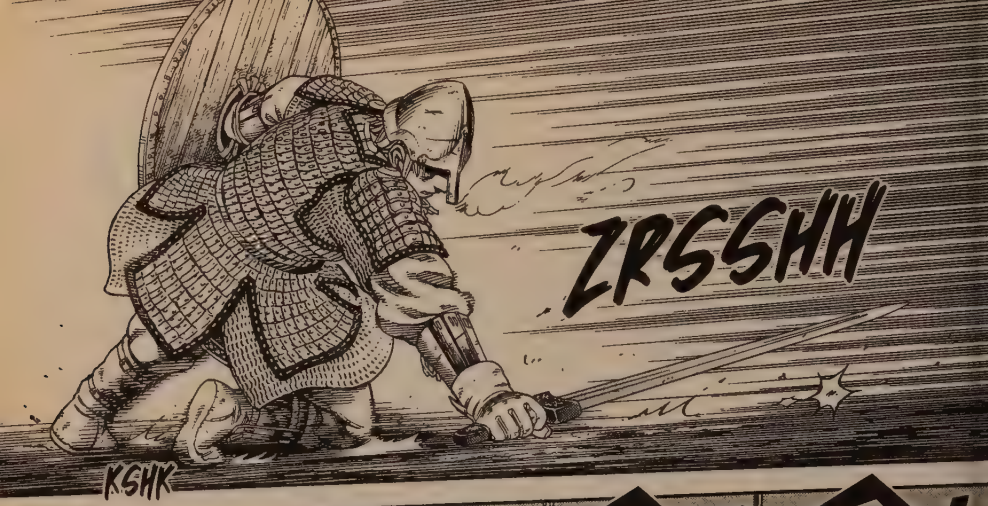
TINNNG

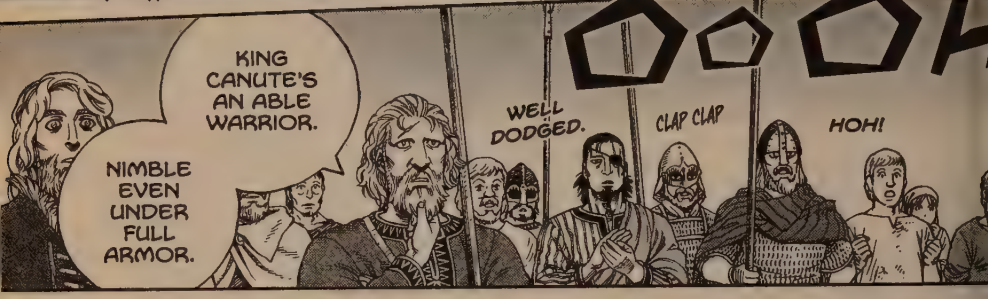
GAKK

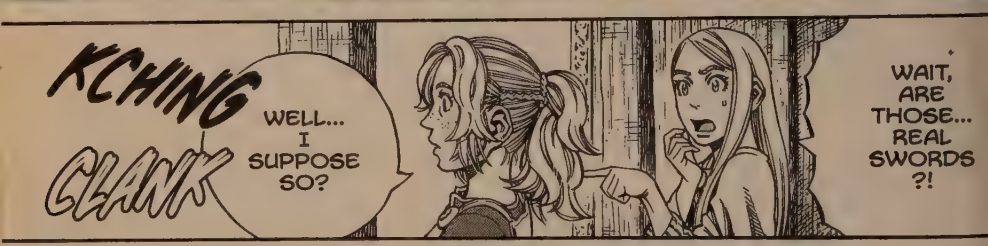
THUD

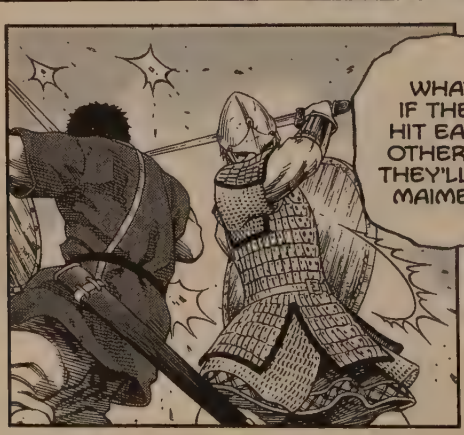

THWAM
MMF!
VIP
TAK
KCHING
WHAM

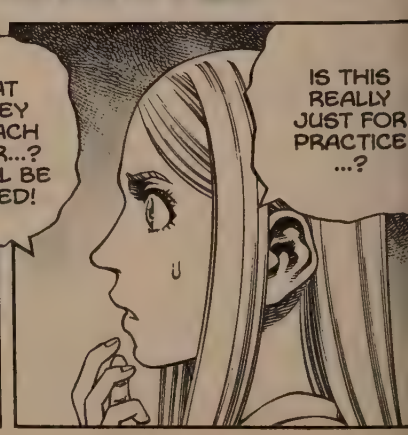

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
ZZSH

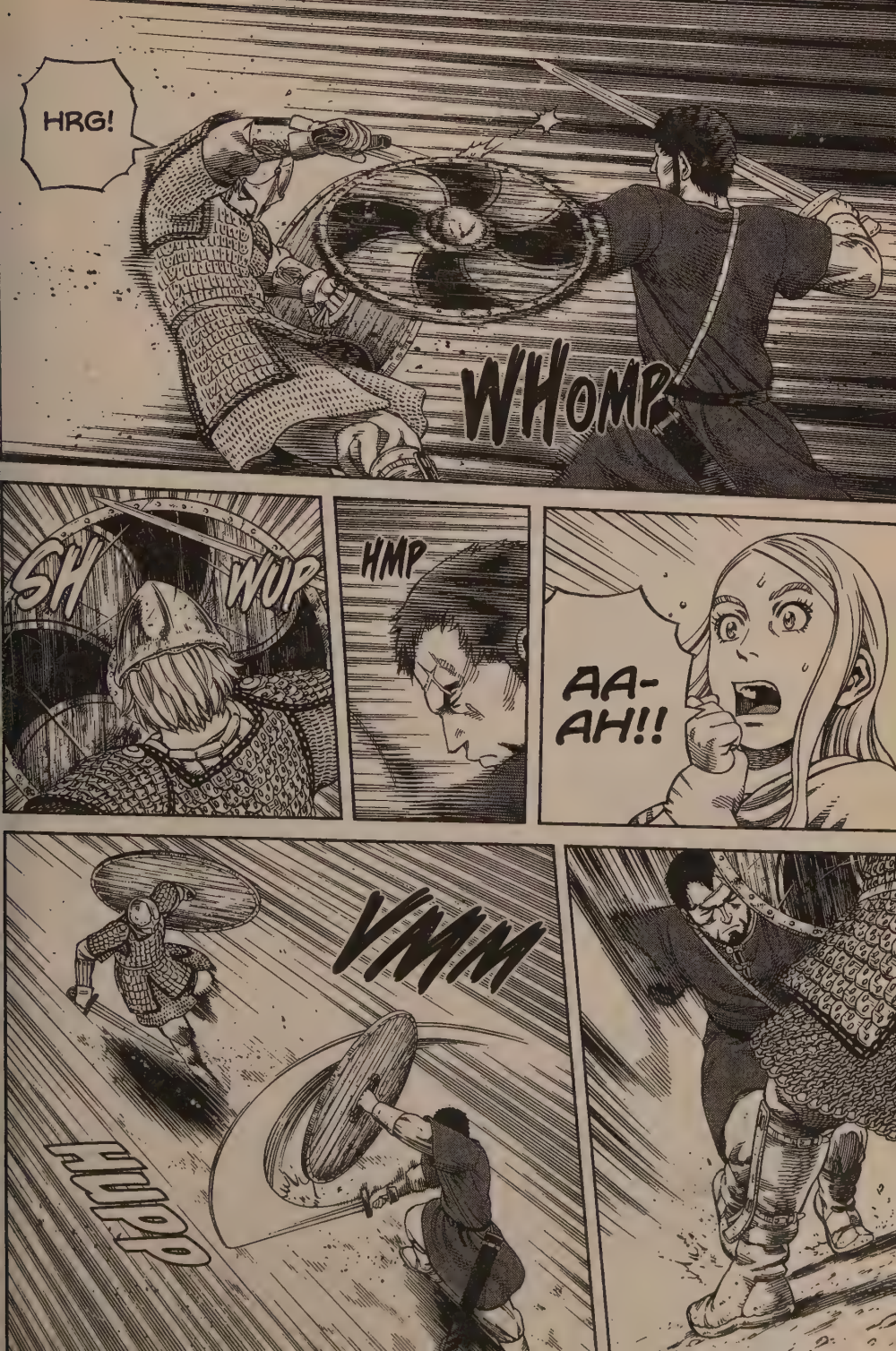

ZRSSHH
KSHK

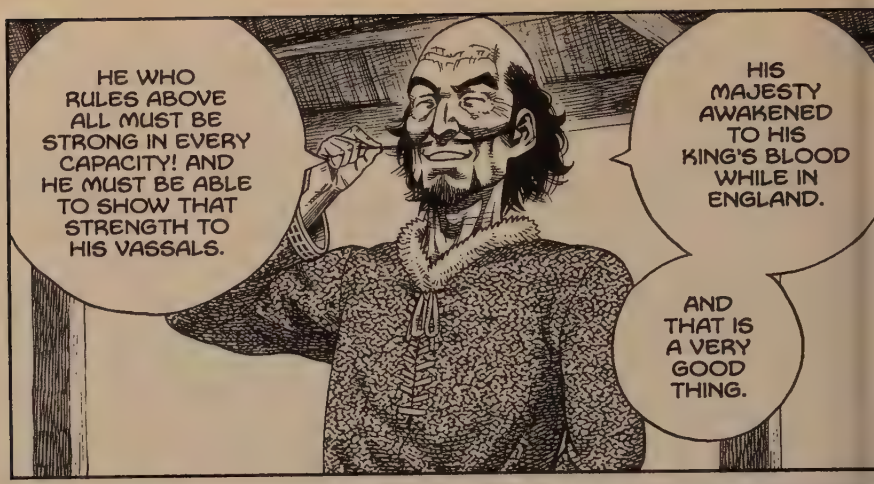

NIMBLE EVEN UNDER FULL ARMOR.
KING CANUTE'S AN ABLE WARRIOR.
WELL DODGED.
CLAP CLAP
HOH!


KCHING
CLANK
WELL... I SUPPOSE SO?
WAIT, ARE THOSE... REAL SWORDS ?!

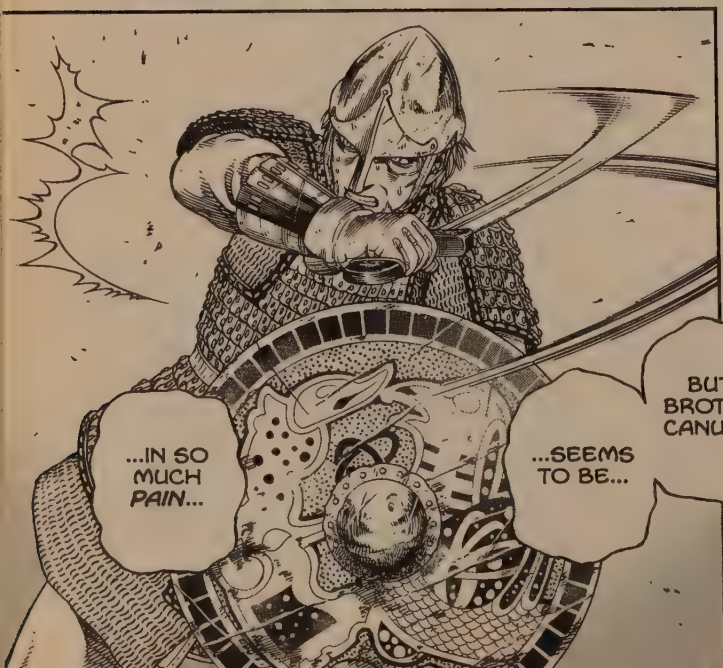

WHAT IF THEY HIT EACH OTHER...? THEY'LL BE MAIMED!

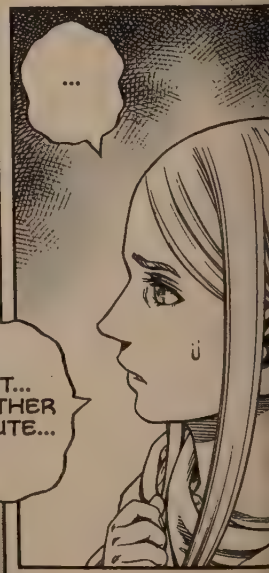

IS THIS REALLY JUST FOR PRACTICE ...?

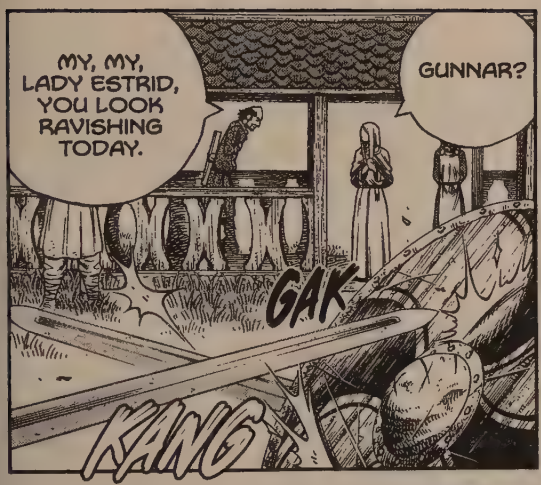

HRG!
WHOMP
SH
WUP
HMP
AA-AH!!
VMM
HUPP


HE WHO RULES ABOVE ALL MUST BE STRONG IN EVERY CAPACITY! AND HE MUST BE ABLE TO SHOW THAT STRENGTH TO HIS VASSALS.
HIS MAJESTY AWAKENED TO HIS KING'S BLOOD WHILE IN ENGLAND.
AND THAT IS A VERY GOOD THING.

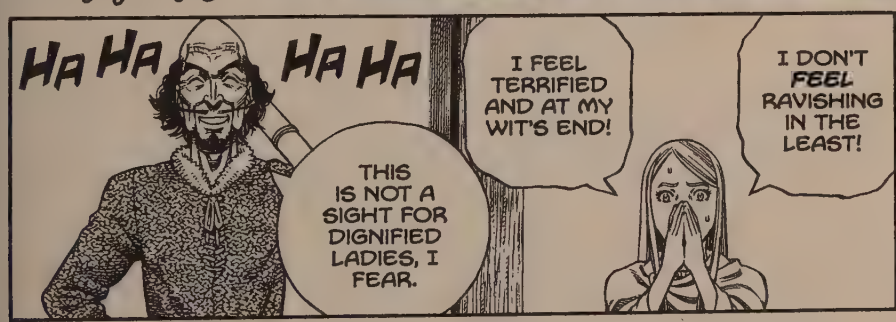
NORSEMEN WILL NOT FOLLOW THE ORDERS OF A WEAK MAN.

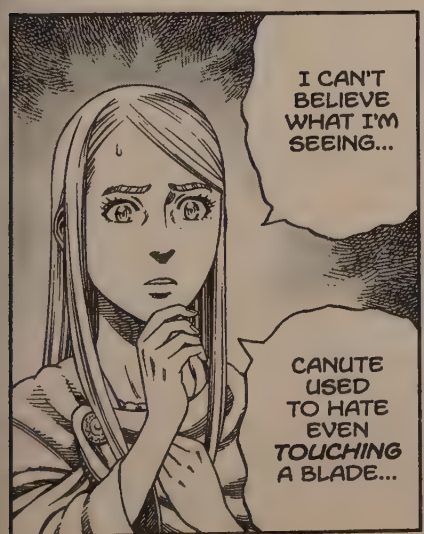

...IN SO MUCH PAIN...
...SEEMS TO BE...

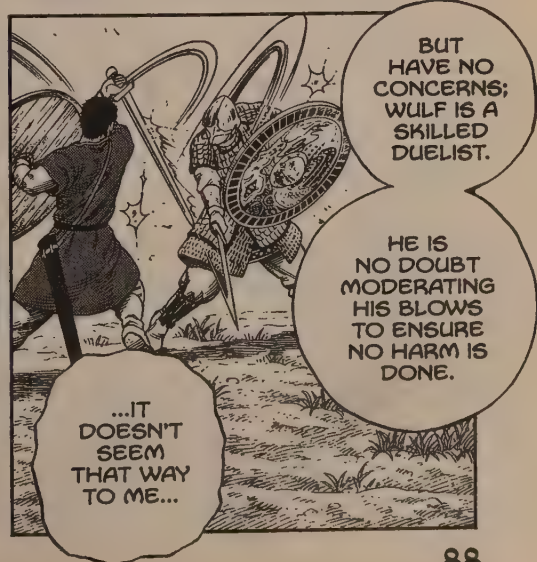

...
BUT... BROTHER CANUTE...

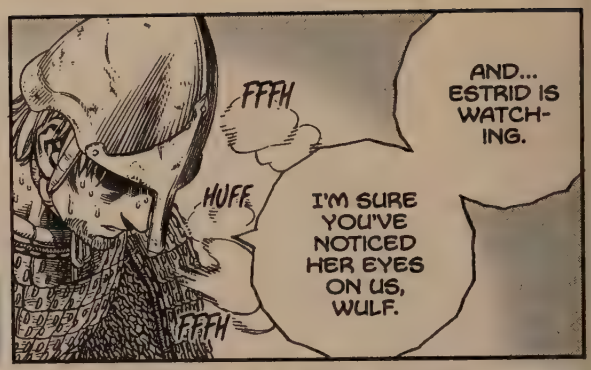

MY, MY, LADY ESTRID, YOU LOOK RAVISHING TODAY.
GUNNAR?
GAK
KANG

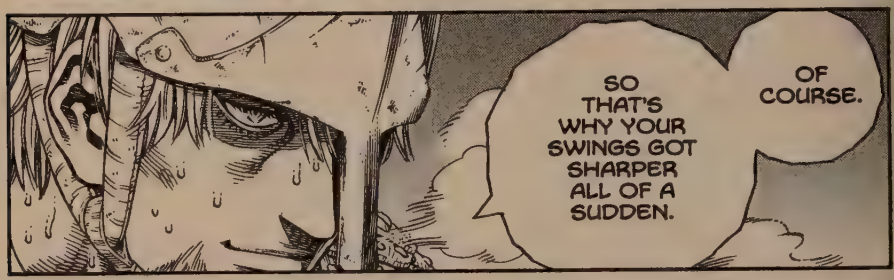
OOH.
EVER DEDICATED!

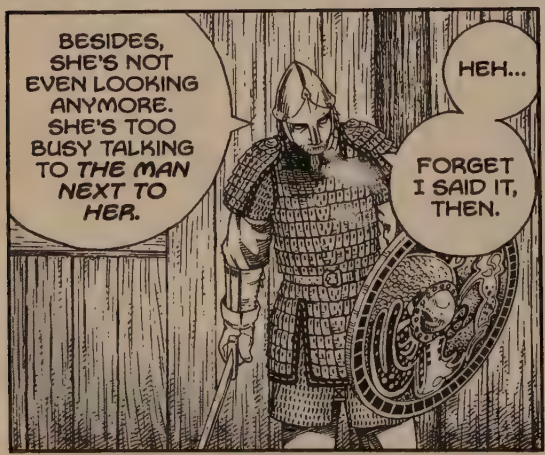

HA HA HA HA
THIS IS NOT A SIGHT FOR DIGNIFIED LADIES, I FEAR.
I FEEL TERRIFIED AND AT MY WIT'S END!
I DON'T FEEL RAVISHING IN THE LEAST!


I CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT I'M SEEING...
CANUTE USED TO HATE EVEN TOUCHING A BLADE...


BUT HAVE NO CONCERNS; WULF IS A SKILLED DUELIST.
HE IS NO DOUBT MODERATING HIS BLOWS TO ENSURE NO HARM IS DONE.
...IT DOESN'T SEEM THAT WAY TO ME...

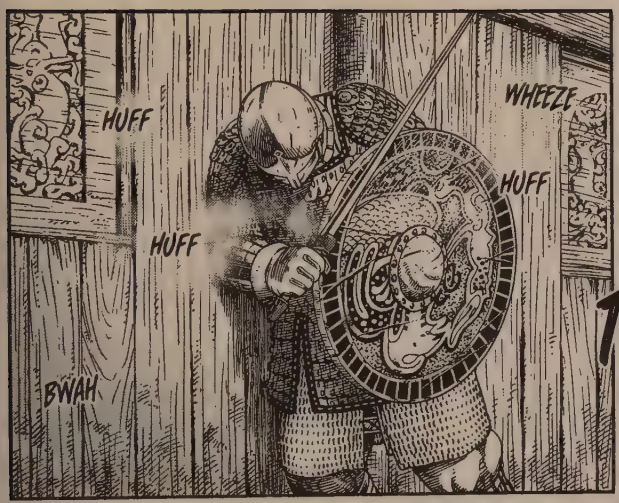

FFFH
HUFF
FFFH
I'M SURE YOU'VE NOTICED HER EYES ON US, WULF.
AND... ESTRID IS WATCH-ING.


SO THAT'S WHY YOUR SWINGS GOT SHARPER ALL OF A SUDDEN.
OF COURSE.

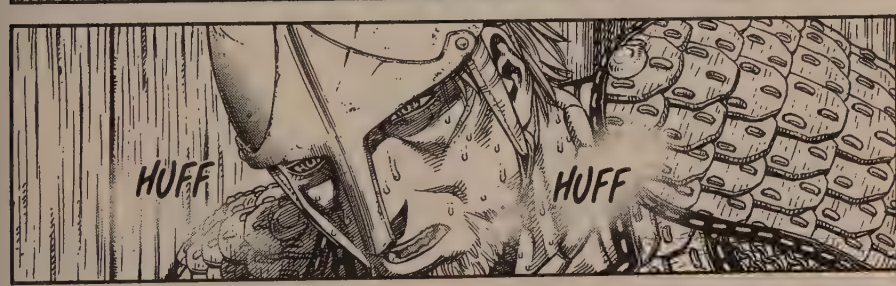

BESIDES, SHE'S NOT EVEN LOOKING ANYMORE. SHE'S TOO BUSY TALKING TO *THE MAN NEXT TO HER.*
HEH...
FORGET I SAID IT, THEN.

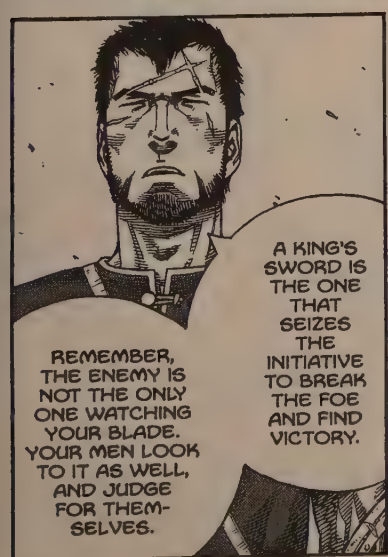
WHA-!
DON'T START UP WITH THAT AGAIN, PLEASE! YOU WON'T CATCH ME WITH THAT ONE TWICE!

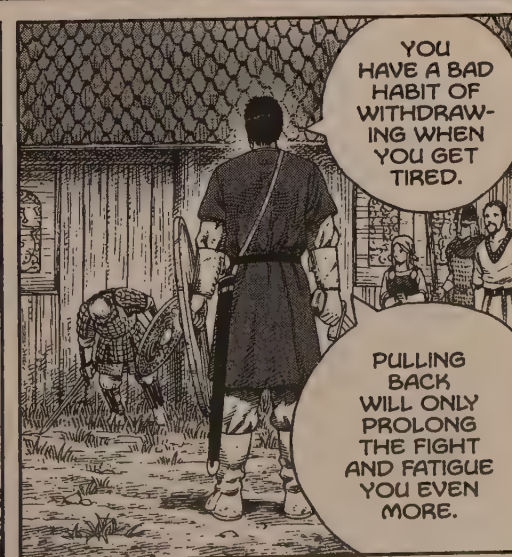
PEEK...


HUFF
HUFF
BWAH
WHEEZE
HUFF

THMP

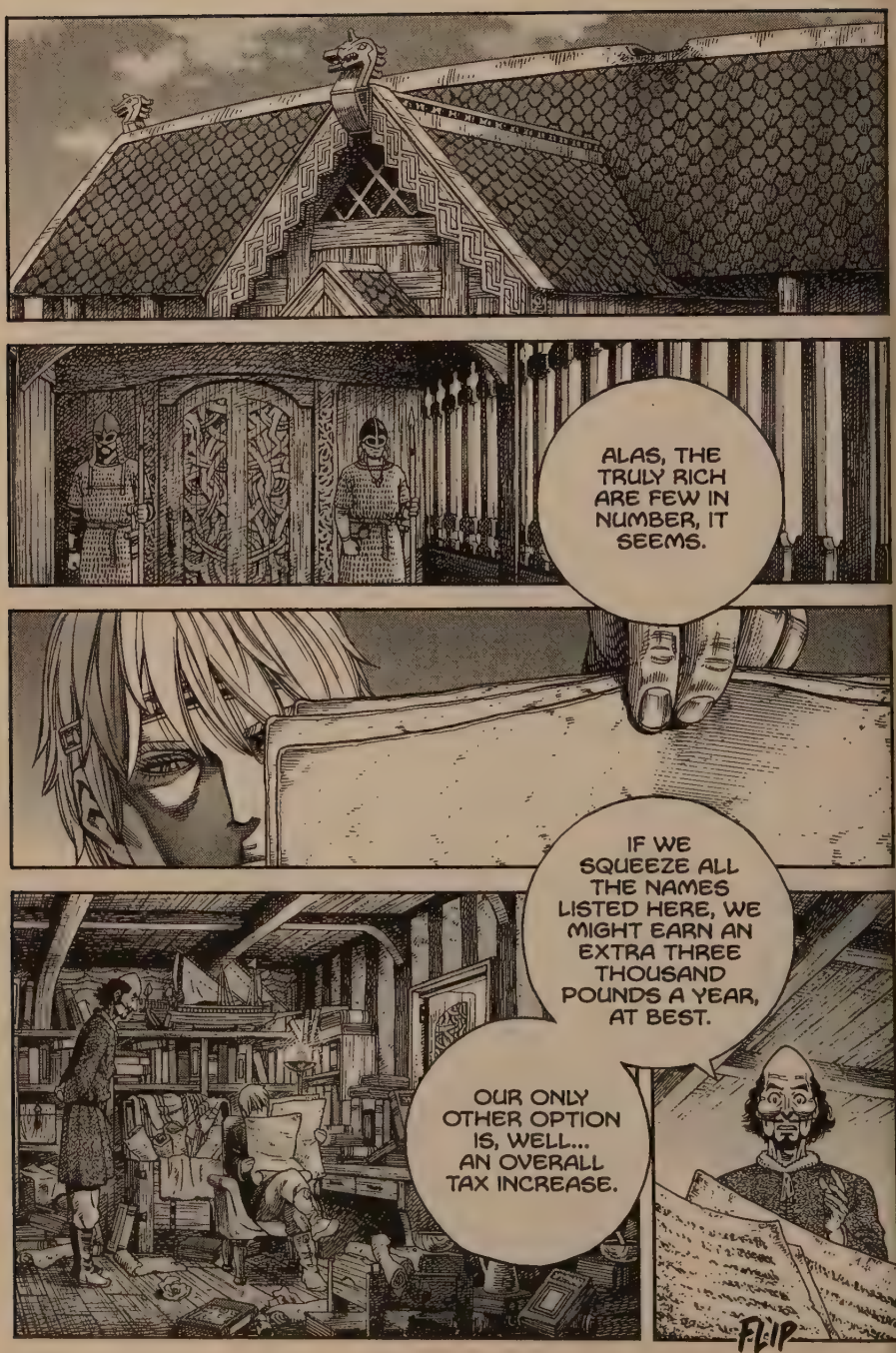

HUFF
HUFF

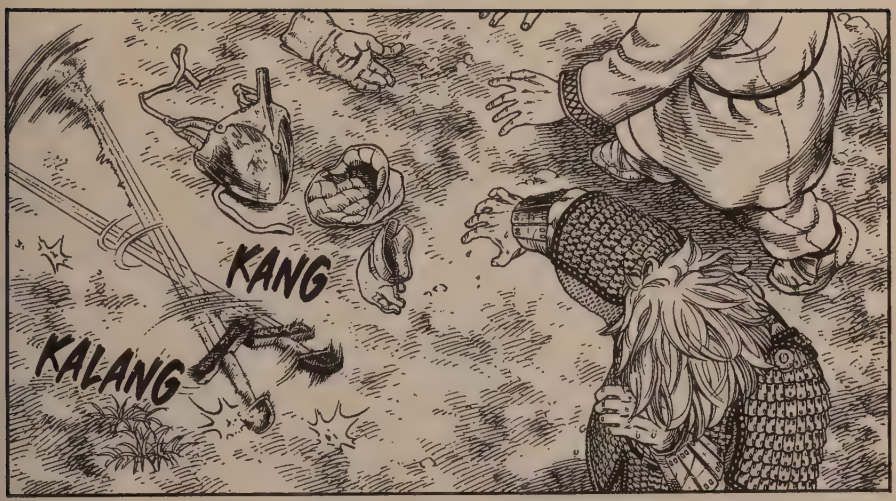

A KING'S SWORD IS THE ONE THAT SEIZES THE INITIATIVE TO BREAK THE FOE AND FIND VICTORY.
REMEMBER, THE ENEMY IS NOT THE ONLY ONE WATCHING YOUR BLADE. YOUR MEN LOOK TO IT AS WELL, AND JUDGE FOR THEMSELVES.


YOU HAVE A BAD HABIT OF WITHDRAWING WHEN YOU GET TIRED.
PULLING BACK WILL ONLY PROLONG THE FIGHT AND FATIGUE YOU EVEN MORE.

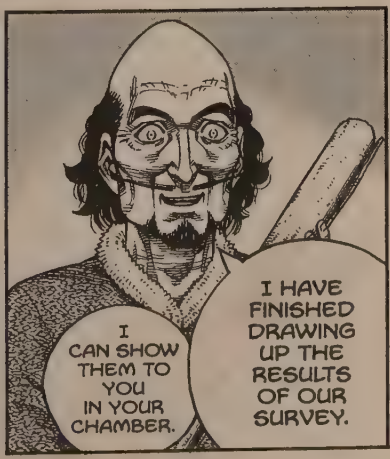
I YIELD...
...
CLANK
CLUNK
RAAAHH
CLAP CLAP
WHEW
BWAAH
WELL, I'LL BE DAMNED!
HE GOT WULF TO YIELD, EVEN IF IT TOOK HIM FIVE BOUTS!
SEEMED LIKE HE CAUGHT WULF OFF-GUARD ON THAT LAST ONE.

VWO
OM
?!
HRGH!
SHP
!!
TH
WAKK


ALAS, THE TRULY RICH ARE FEW IN NUMBER, IT SEEMS.
IF WE SQUEEZE ALL THE NAMES LISTED HERE, WE MIGHT EARN AN EXTRA THREE THOUSAND POUNDS A YEAR, AT BEST.
OUR ONLY OTHER OPTION IS, WELL... AN OVERALL TAX INCREASE.
FLIP


KANG
KALANG

BRILLIANT SWORDS-MANSHIP, MAJESTY!
WHAT DO YOU WANT, GUNNAR?
ER... WELL...
YOUR MAJESTY! I'VE WARNED YOU AGAINST HURLING YOUR BLADE ASIDE LIKE THAT.
KSHANG


I HAVE FINISHED DRAWING UP THE RESULTS OF OUR SURVEY.
I CAN SHOW THEM TO YOU IN YOUR CHAMBER.

FOLLOWING ENGLAND'S SUBJUGATION, CANUTE KEPT HIS DANISH SOLDIERS PRESENT AS AN OCCUPYING FORCE.

BUT THE COSTS OF MAINTAINING THAT ARMY CAME FROM ENGLISH TAXES, WHICH LED TO UNREST AMONG THE ENGLISH PEOPLE.

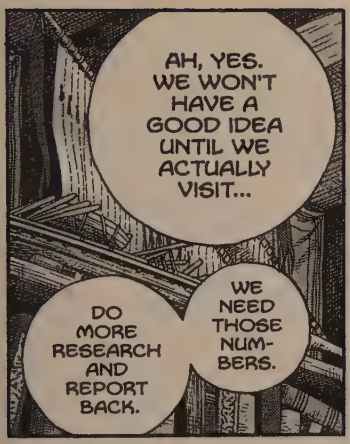
...HE WOULD HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO SHRINK HIS OCCUPATION FORCE.

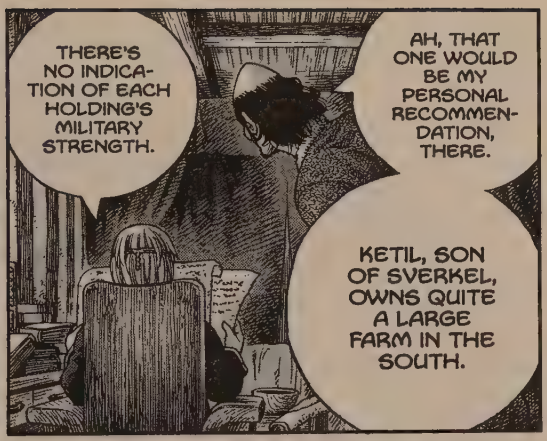
...ADDITIONAL FUNDS FROM HIS OTHER TERRITORY, DENMARK...

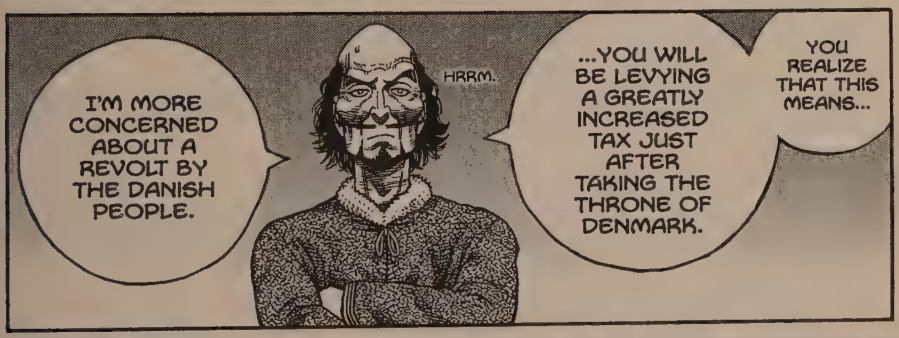
IF CANUTE COULD NOT PROCURE...

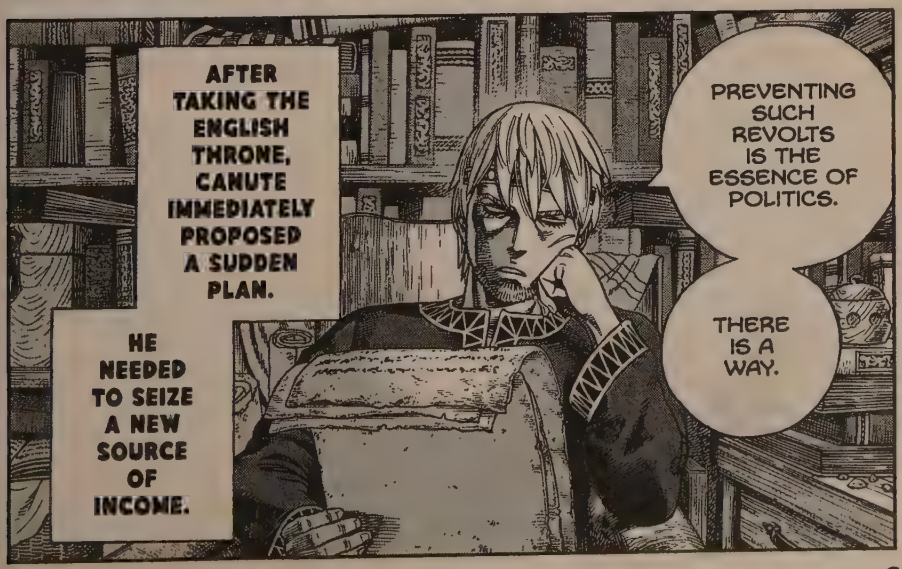
EXPANDING OUR DIRECT HOLDINGS.

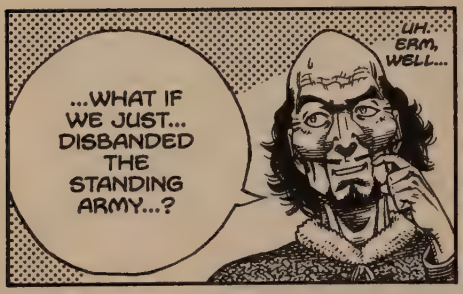
YOU SAY THERE IS A WAY, BUT I DO NOT SEE-

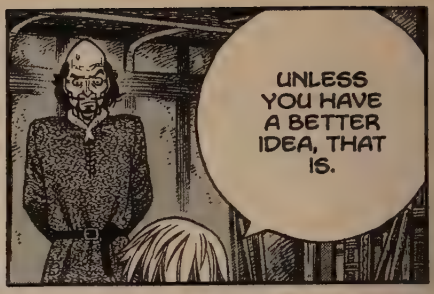

AH, YES. WE WON'T HAVE A GOOD IDEA UNTIL WE ACTUALLY VISIT...
WE NEED THOSE NUMBERS.
DO MORE RESEARCH AND REPORT BACK.

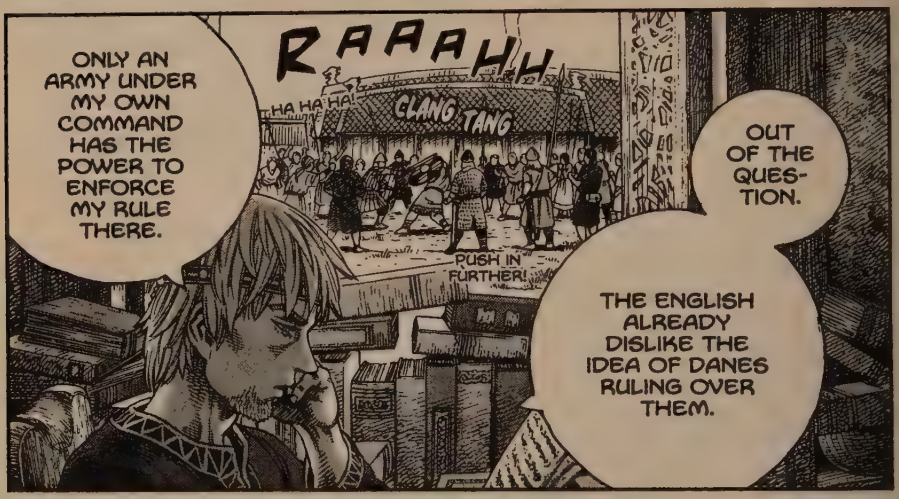

THERE'S NO INDICATION OF EACH HOLDING'S MILITARY STRENGTH.
AH, THAT ONE WOULD BE MY PERSONAL RECOMMENDATION, THERE.
KETIL, SON OF SVERKEL, OWNS QUITE A LARGE FARM IN THE SOUTH.

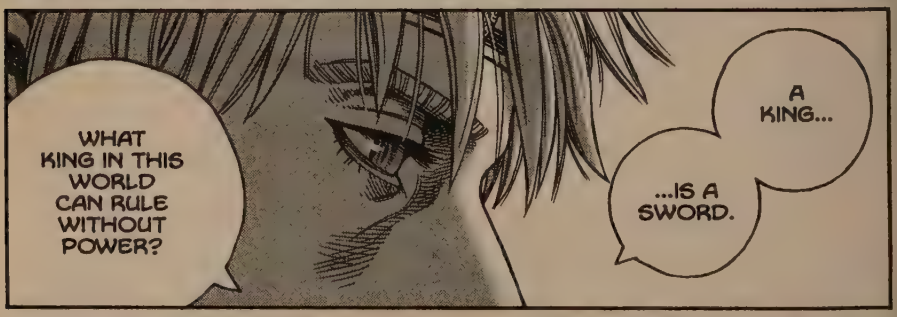

I'M MORE CONCERNED ABOUT A REVOLT BY THE DANISH PEOPLE.
HRRM.
...YOU WILL BE LEVYING A GREATLY INCREASED TAX JUST AFTER TAKING THE THRONE OF DENMARK.
YOU REALIZE THAT THIS MEANS...

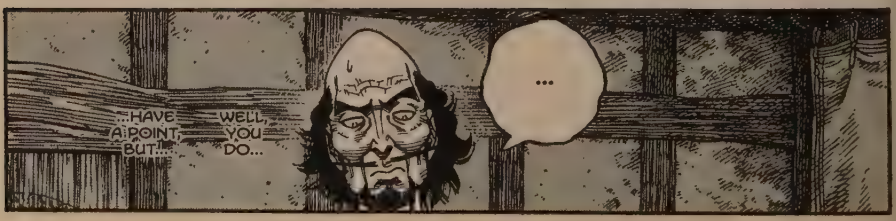

AFTER TAKING THE ENGLISH THRONE, CANUTE IMMEDIATELY PROPOSED A SUDDEN PLAN.
HE NEEDED TO SEIZE A NEW SOURCE OF INCOME.
PREVENTING SUCH REVOLTS IS THE ESSENCE OF POLITICS.
THERE IS A WAY.

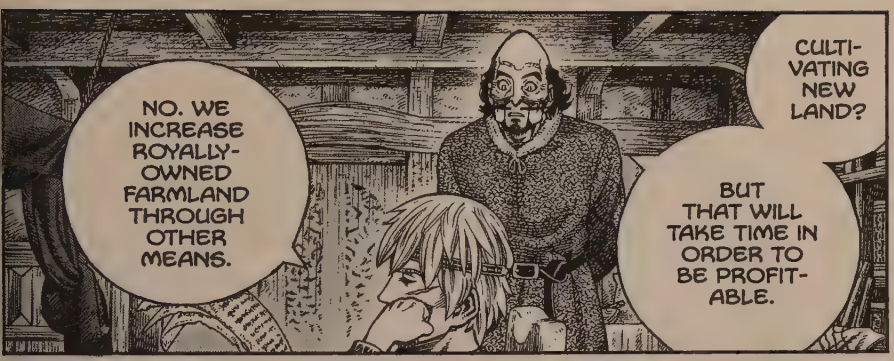

...WHAT IF WE JUST... DISBANDED THE STANDING ARMY...?
UH... ERM, WELL...


UNLESS YOU HAVE A BETTER IDEA, THAT IS.

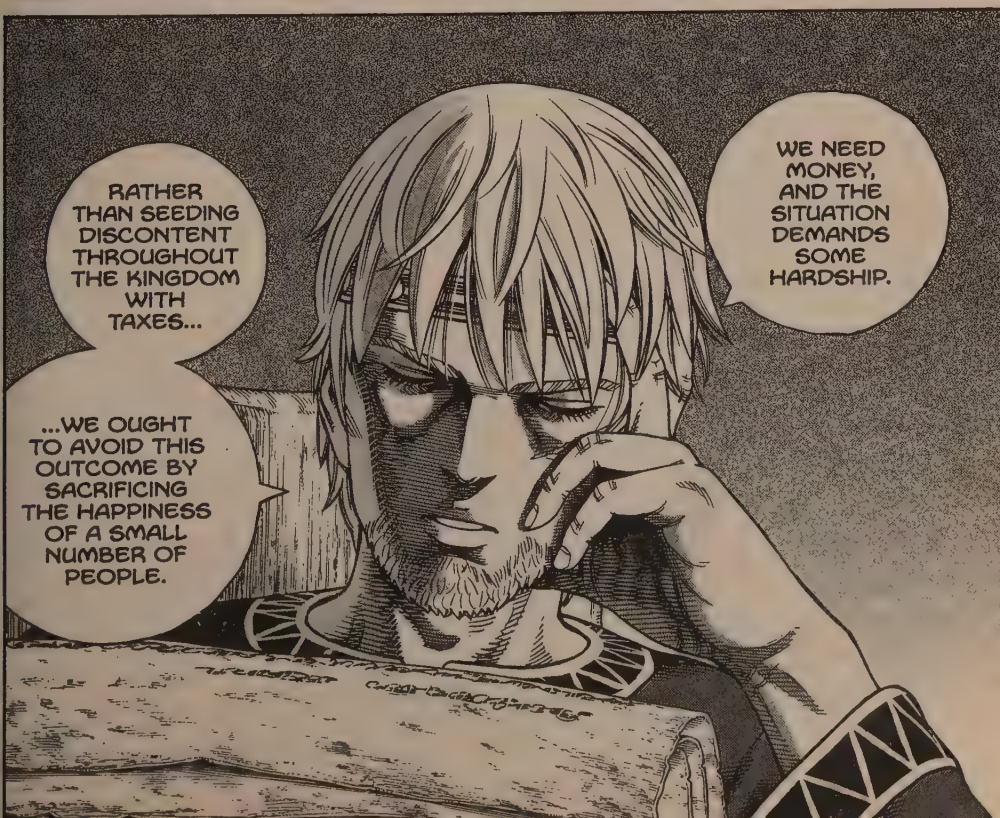

ONLY AN ARMY UNDER MY OWN COMMAND HAS THE POWER TO ENFORCE MY RULE THERE.
RAAAHH
HA HA HA
CLANG TANG
PUSH IN FURTHER!
OUT OF THE QUES-TION.
THE ENGLISH ALREADY DISLIKE THE IDEA OF DANES RULING OVER THEM.

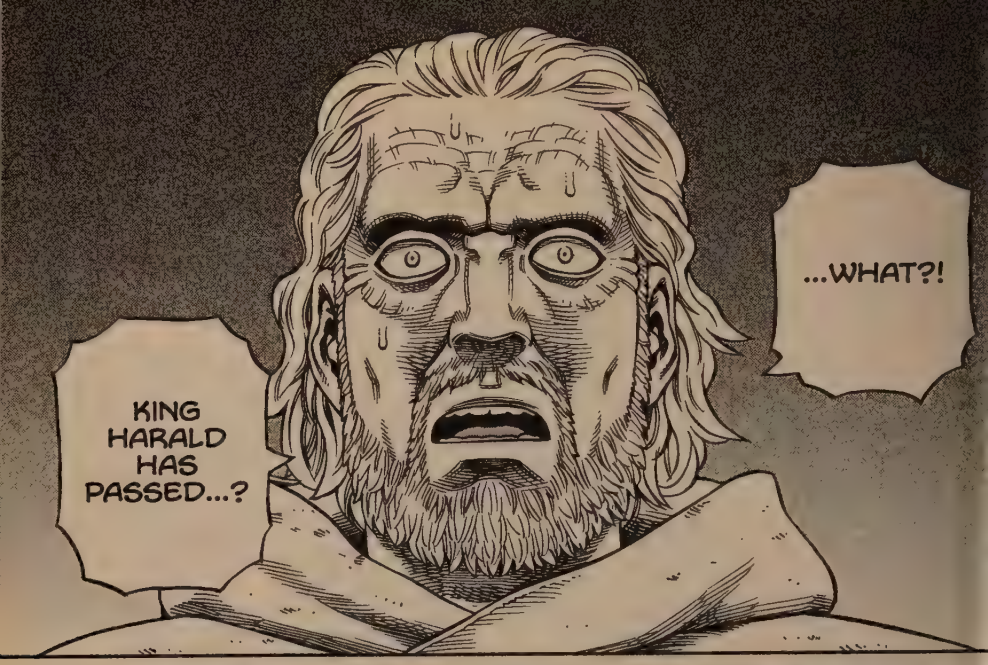

WHAT KING IN THIS WORLD CAN RULE WITHOUT POWER?
A KING...
...IS A SWORD.


...HAVE A POINT, BUT...
WELL, YOU DO...
...

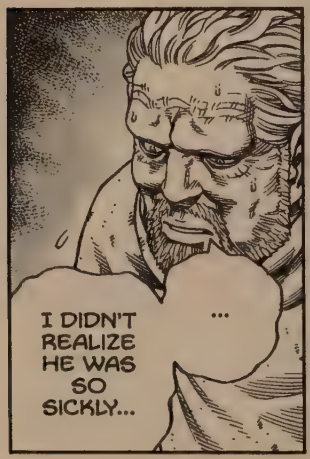

CULTI-VATING NEW LAND?
BUT THAT WILL TAKE TIME IN ORDER TO BE PROFIT-ABLE.
NO. WE INCREASE ROYALLY-OWNED FARMLAND THROUGH OTHER MEANS.

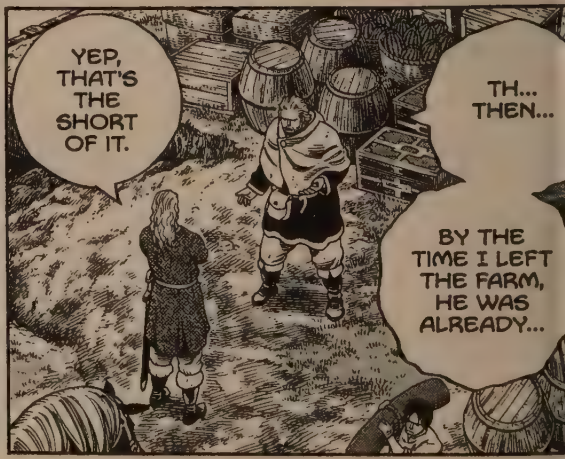
...!!
YOU MEAN... EXPRO-PRIA-TION?!
BUT YOUR MAJESTY, THIS CANNOT BE WISE...

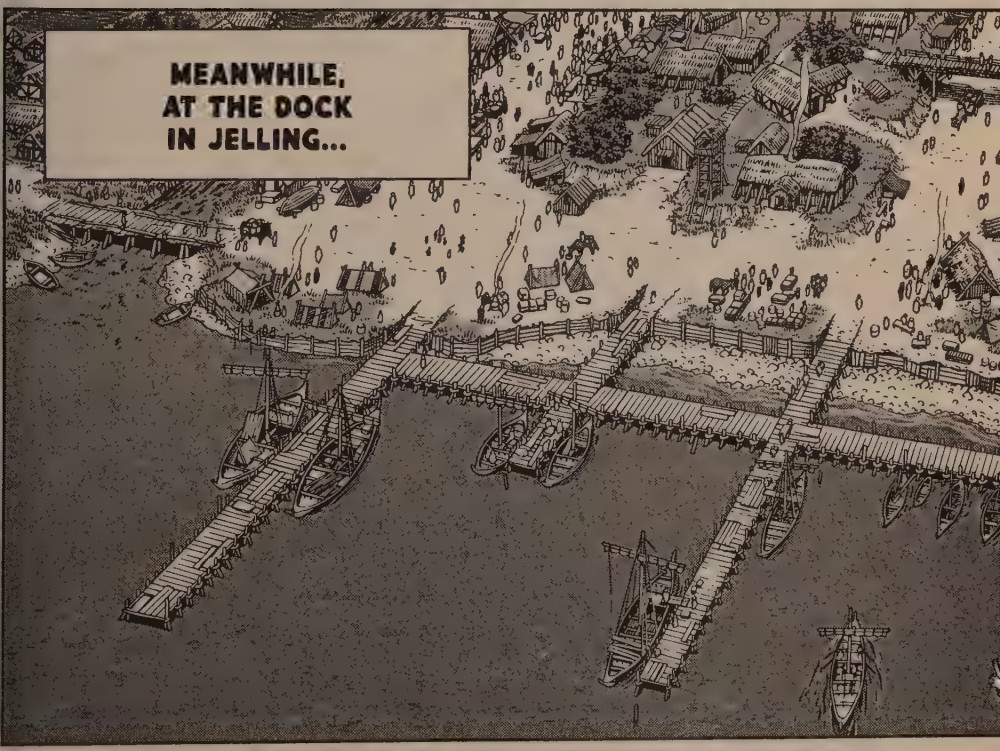

WE NEED MONEY, AND THE SITUATION DEMANDS SOME HARDSHIP.
RATHER THAN SEEDING DISCONTENT THROUGHOUT THE KINGDOM WITH TAXES...
...WE OUGHT TO AVOID THIS OUTCOME BY SACRIFICING THE HAPPINESS OF A SMALL NUMBER OF PEOPLE.

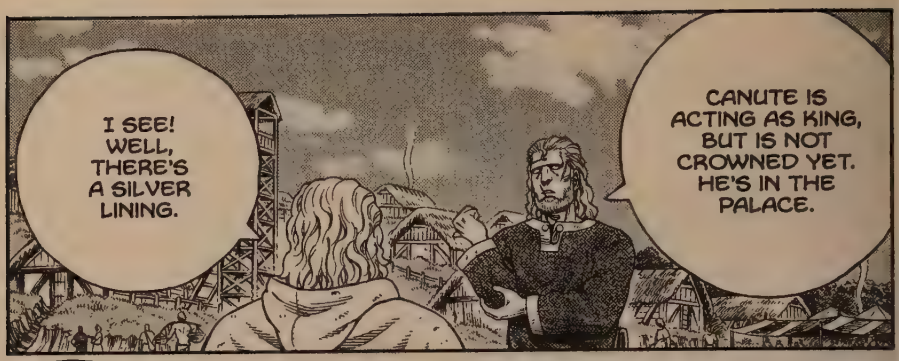

KING HARALD HAS PASSED...?
...WHAT?!

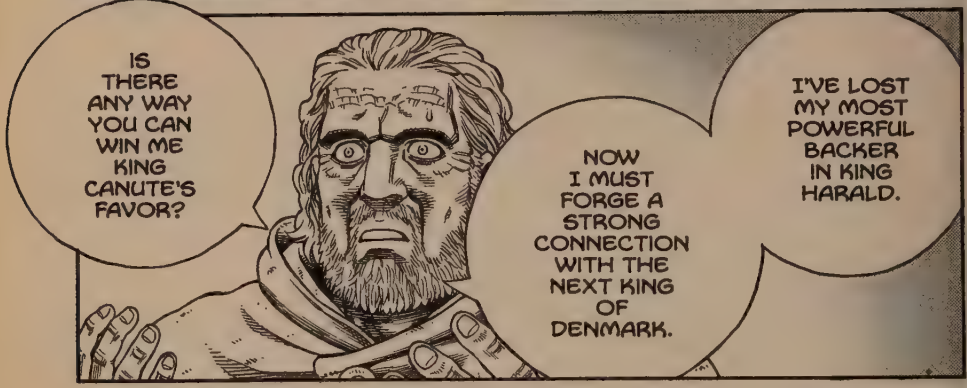
YOU WERE JUST A BIT TOO LATE, DAD.
HAPPENED A WEEK AGO. FUNERAL'S DONE AND EVERY-THING.

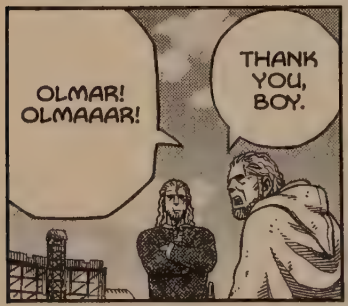

I DIDN'T REALIZE HE WAS SO SICKLY...
...

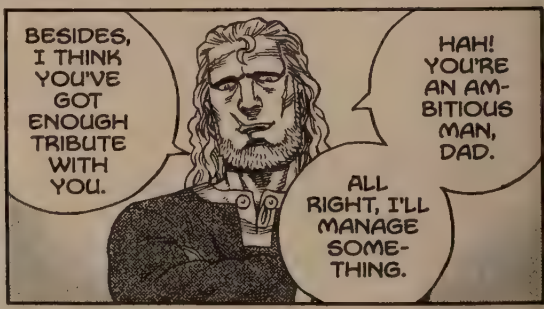

YEP, THAT'S THE SHORT OF IT.
TH... THEN...
BY THE TIME I LEFT THE FARM, HE WAS ALREADY...


MEANWHILE,
AT THE DOCK
IN JELLING...


I SEE! WELL, THERE'S A SILVER LINING.
CANUTE IS ACTING AS KING, BUT IS NOT CROWNED YET. HE'S IN THE PALACE.


IS THERE ANY WAY YOU CAN WIN ME KING CANUTE'S FAVOR?
NOW I MUST FORGE A STRONG CONNECTION WITH THE NEXT KING OF DENMARK.
I'VE LOST MY MOST POWERFUL BACKER IN KING HARALD.


OLMAR! OLMAAAR!
THANK YOU, BOY.


BESIDES, I THINK YOU'VE GOT ENOUGH TRIBUTE WITH YOU.
HAH! YOU'RE AN AMBITIOUS MAN, DAD.
ALL RIGHT, I'LL MANAGE SOMETHING.

OH, ER...
YOUNG MASTER WENT INTO TOWN ON HIS OWN.
WHERE'S OLMAR GONE?

WHAT A DISASTER... I BROUGHT AN ENTIRE MOUNTAIN OF GOODS TO PAY MY RESPECTS...

THREE WHOLE KNERRIR FULL?

HA-HA! HOW GENEROUS OF YOU!

IF YOU'RE HERE TO WELCOME ME TO JELLING, THORGIL...

...DOES THAT MEAN *KING CANUTE* IS HERE AS WELL?

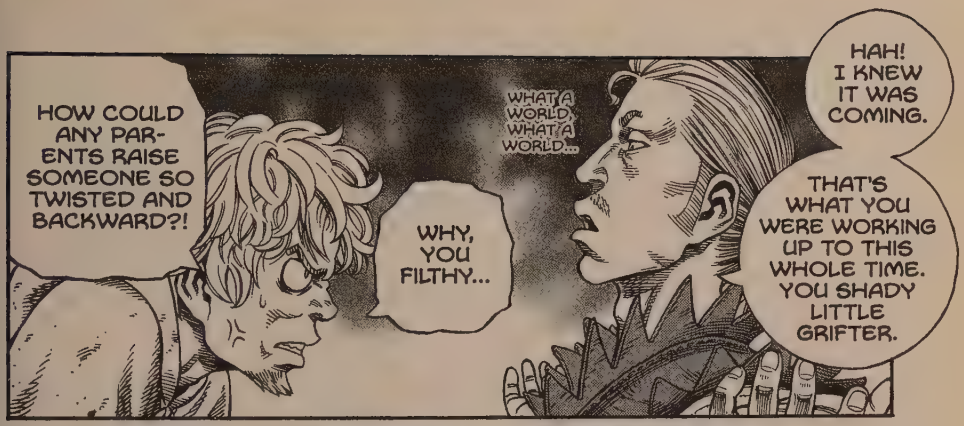
YEP.

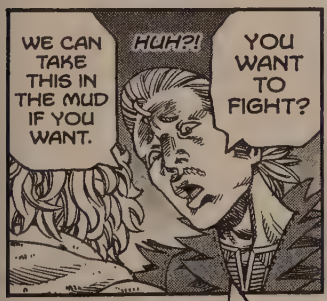
I AM HIS LOYAL THEGN, BELIEVE IT OR NOT.

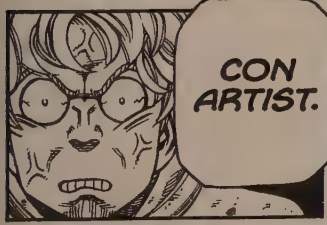
YOU KNOW FULL WELL IT WAS YOU THAT BUMPED INTO ME!! ADMIT IT, YOU LITTLE BITCH!!
I'D SAY YOU'RE THE ONE WHO OWES ME AN APOLOGY !!
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO NOW?! WHO WILL BUY MY RUGS LIKE THIS?!
...WHAT?! HOW DARE YOU BLAME ME FOR THIS!!
YOU WILL BE REIMBURSING ME FOR THE MERCHANDISE, THOUGH!
WHAT?! YOU ACCUSE ME OF STAGING THIS LIKE SOME CHEAP SCAM?!
MURMUR
WHAT'S THIS, THEN?
OOH, IT'S A FIGHT.
THAT AIN'T MY FAULT! AND DON'T YOU EVEN THINK ABOUT FORCIN' ME TO BUY 'EM! YOU WON'T CATCH ME WITH THAT ONE!!

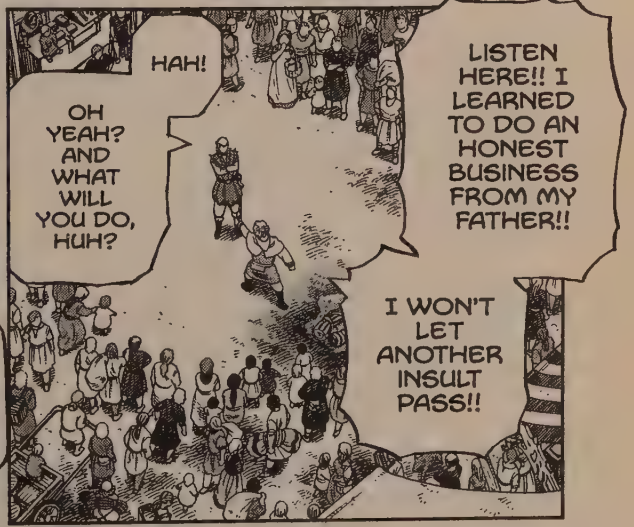
HE'S ALREADY TWENTY, NOT A CHILD ANYMORE.
HE *IS* A CHILD!
AND YOU JUST LET HIM GO?!
I TOLD YOU TO KEEP AN EYE ON HIM!
THERE, THERE, DAD.
JUST IMAGINING WHAT HE'LL GET INTO ALONE IN TOWN...
HAHHH...
THE IDIOT BOY WILL *ALWAYS* BE A CHILD!
I'VE NO DOUBT HE'S ALREADY GOTTEN HIMSELF INTO AN ARGUMENT OVER A MERE BUMPED SHOULDER OR TWO...

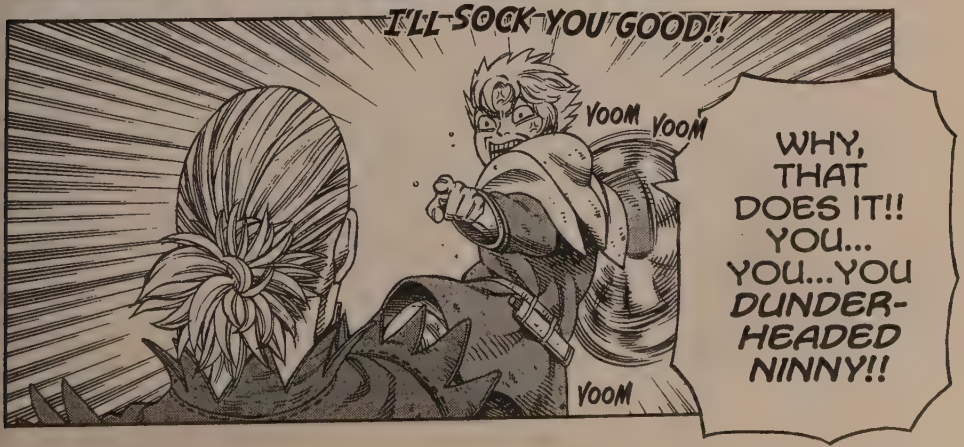
UH-
OHH
SHWAAA
MURMUR...
HE DREW HIS SWORD...
MURMUR...


HOW COULD ANY PARENTS RAISE SOMEONE SO TWISTED AND BACKWARD?!
WHY, YOU FILTHY...
WHAT A WORLD, WHAT A WORLD...
HAH! I KNEW IT WAS COMING.
THAT'S WHAT YOU WERE WORKING UP TO THIS WHOLE TIME. YOU SHADY LITTLE GRIFTER.


WE CAN TAKE THIS IN THE MUD IF YOU WANT.
HUH?!
YOU WANT TO FIGHT?


CON ARTIST.


HAH!
OH YEAH? AND WHAT WILL YOU DO, HUH?
LISTEN HERE!! I LEARNED TO DO AN HONEST BUSINESS FROM MY FATHER!!
I WON'T LET ANOTHER INSULT PASS!!


I'LL SOCK YOU GOOD!!
VOOM
VOOM
VOOM
WHY, THAT DOES IT!! YOU... YOU...YOU DUNDER-HEADED NINNY!!

WE'RE HAVIN' A MAN'S FIGHT!! DON'T BUTT YOUR HEAD IN WHERE IT DON'T BELONG!!

WHUH! WHAT THE FUCK, DAD?!

WHY DO YOU GO OFF AND START A FIGHT EVERY TIME I TAKE MY EYES OFF OF YOU?!

YOU STUPID, STUPID BOY!!

PFFT!

SO MUCH FOR HIS ATTITUDE.

HA-HA-HA!

HERE COMES DAD!

UH-OH.

JINGLE

ALLOW ME TO PAY YOU FOR THE TEXTILES.

WILL THIS COVER THE DAMAGES ?

THWONK

YOU HAVE MY APOLO-GIES.

HMM, WELL, I SUP-POSE...

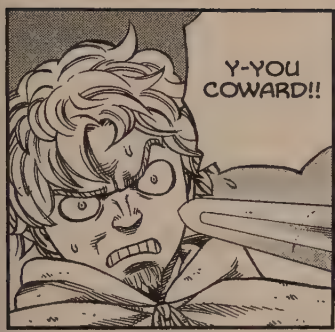
AS LONG AS YOU'RE ABLE TO COVER, I SUPPOSE I CAN FORGET-

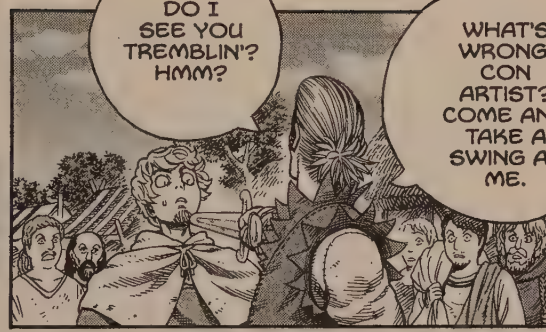
HEY! BUG-EYES!

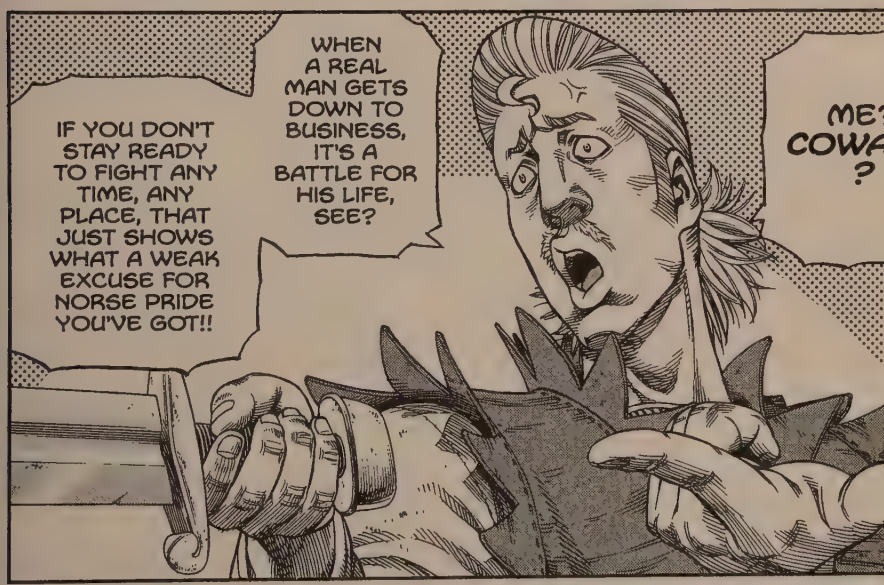
GIVE HIM HIS CHANGE!

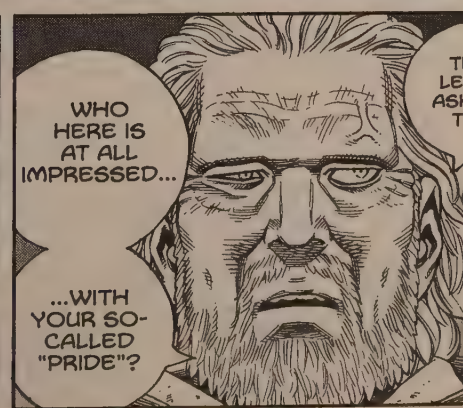
SHUFF

WHOA...

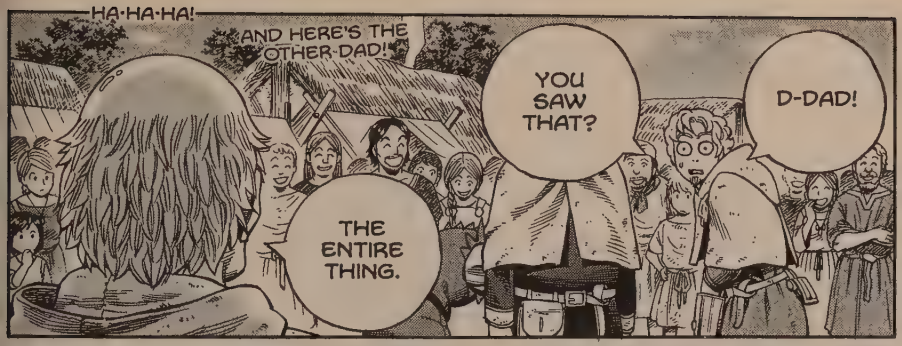

Y-YOU COWARD!!

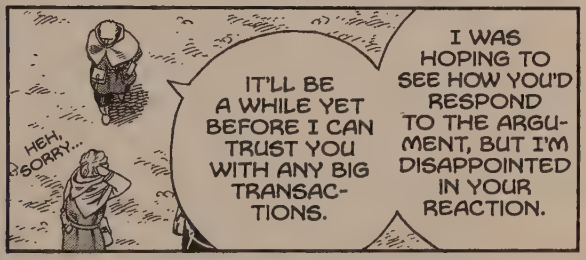

DO I SEE YOU TREMBLIN'? HMM?
WHAT'S WRONG, CON ARTIST? COME AND TAKE A SWING AT ME.


IF YOU DON'T STAY READY TO FIGHT ANY TIME, ANY PLACE, THAT JUST SHOWS WHAT A WEAK EXCUSE FOR NORSE PRIDE YOU'VE GOT!!
WHEN A REAL MAN GETS DOWN TO BUSINESS, IT'S A BATTLE FOR HIS LIFE, SEE?
ME? COWARD ?


WHO HERE IS AT ALL IMPRESSED...
...WITH YOUR SO-CALLED "PRIDE"?
THEN LET ME ASK YOU THIS.

CHAPTER 76: OLMAR'S FINEST HOUR





SMACK

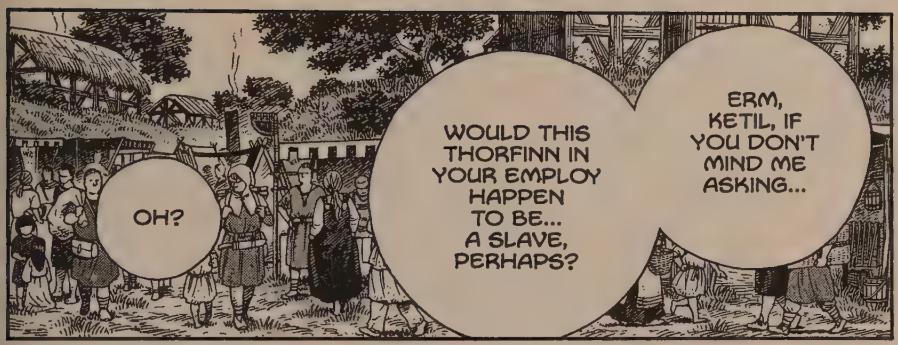
MANY PARDONS FOR MY SON'S POOR BEHAVIOR.

LEIF ERICSON, AT YOUR SERVICE.

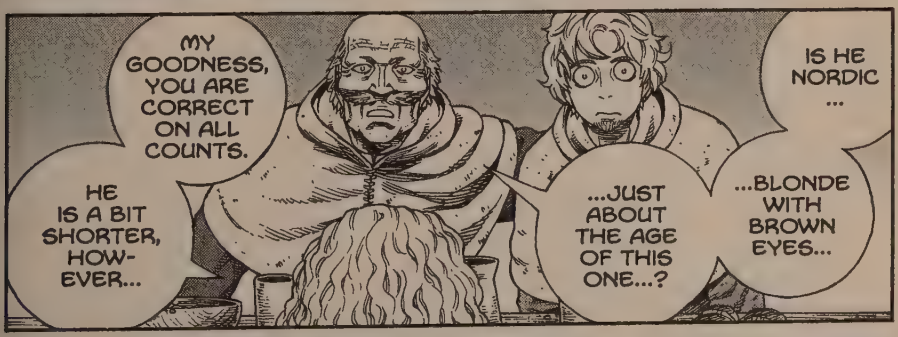
EVERY-ONE CALLS ME "BUG-EYES," SO FEEL FREE.
I'M THORFINN.
SORRY ABOUT THAT EARLIER.
I HAVE A WORKER ON MY FARM WITH THE SAME NAME, THAT'S ALL.
?
OH, PARDON ME.
THORFINN ...?
YOUR SON IS BOLD, AT LEAST.
HA HA HA, WELL, WELL.
...
PERHAPS I SHOULD HAVE NAMED THIS BOY THORFINN, AND HE'D HAVE TURNED OUT BETTER.
A QUIET BUT STEAD FAST LABORE
HA HA

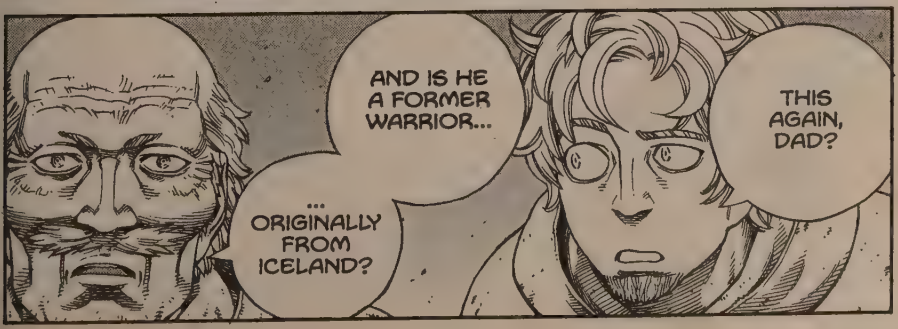
AHH.
AN ADOPTED SON, THEN.
GO ON, BOY, SPEAK FOR YOURSELF.
THAT'S IT IN A NUTSHELL.
JUST A SERIES OF COINCIDENCES THAT BROUGHT HIM TO ME.

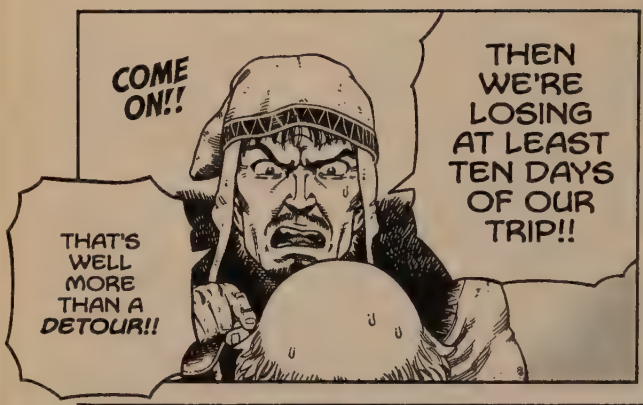
I DO RECALL SEEING MANY, MANY SCARS ON HIS BODY FROM BLADES...
WELL NOW... WHAT WAS HIS STORY, AGAIN?
I KNOW, I KNOW.
BUT ALL THE FEATURES MATCH SO FAR.
DON'T GET YOUR HOPES UP, DAD.
IT'LL JUST END UP LIKE WITH ME...
...YES...
I HAVE BEEN SEARCHING FOR HIM.
IT SEEMS YOU HAVE SOME PAST WITH THIS FELLOW, LEIF.
WOULD YOU TELL ME MORE?
HE IS THE SON OF A FRIEND, WHO FELL INTO SLAVERY...
I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR HIM FOR MANY YEARS...

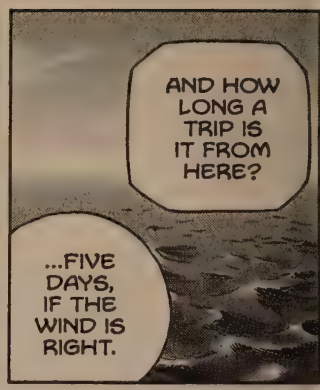

OH?
WOULD THIS THORFINN IN YOUR EMPLOY HAPPEN TO BE... A SLAVE, PERHAPS?
ERM, KETIL, IF YOU DON'T MIND ME ASKING...

I DID NOT REVEAL HIS BACKGROUND BECAUSE I DID NOT WANT TO UPSET YOU BY THE COMPARISON.
YES... I'M SURPRISED THAT YOU COULD TELL.


MY GOODNESS, YOU ARE CORRECT ON ALL COUNTS.
HE IS A BIT SHORTER, HOW-EVER...
IS HE NORDIC ...
...JUST ABOUT THE AGE OF THIS ONE...?
...BLONDE WITH BROWN EYES...

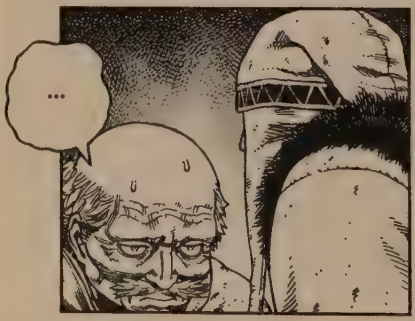

AND IS HE A FORMER WARRIOR...
...ORIGINALLY FROM ICELAND?
THIS AGAIN, DAD?


COME ON!!
THAT'S WELL MORE THAN A DETOUR!!
THEN WE'RE LOSING AT LEAST TEN DAYS OF OUR TRIP!!


AND HOW LONG A TRIP IS IT FROM HERE?
...FIVE DAYS, IF THE WIND IS RIGHT.

I THINK IT'S REALLY HIM!
THIS THORFINN IS NOT LIKE THE PREVIOUS ONES!
BUT LISTEN, MORD!!

WE'RE ALREADY PUSHING IT AS IT IS! WHAT IF WE ADD ANOTHER TEN DAYS, AND WE DON'T HAVE THE LUCK OF THE WIND OR TIDES ON TOP OF THAT?!
IT'S ALREADY AUTUMN, POPS! IF WE DON'T START BACK HOME SOON, THE SEAS AROUND GREENLAND WILL FREEZE!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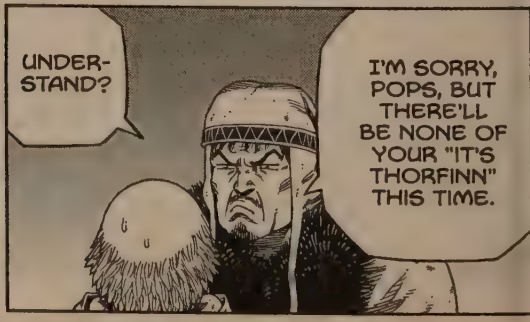
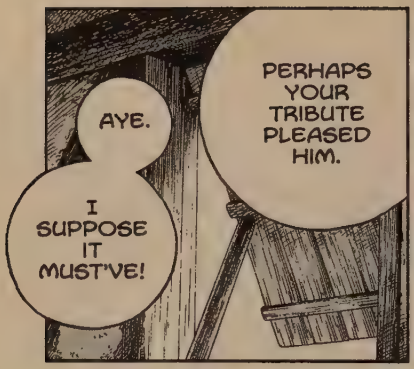
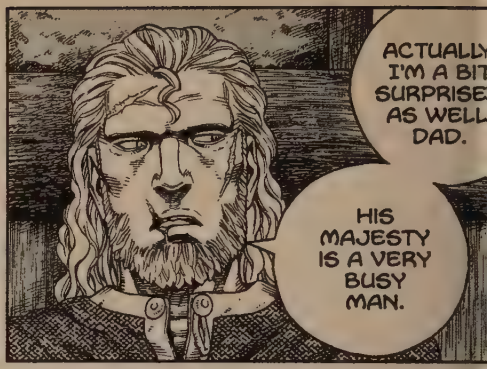
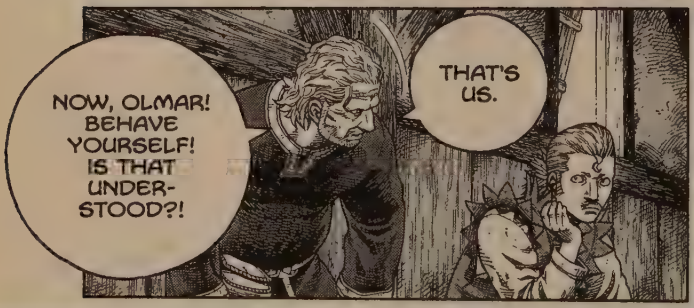

UNDER-STAND?
I'M SORRY, POPS, BUT THERE'LL BE NONE OF YOUR "IT'S THORFINN" THIS TIME.

WHAT ?!
WHERE IN THE SOUTH, POPS?
REALLY, IT'S NOT THAT FAR AWAY, I SWEAR.
KETIL SAILED HERE HIMSELF, AND HE SAID THAT WE COULD JOIN HIM ON HIS RETURN VOYAGE...
ERM, WELL...
TO KETIL'S FARM.
JUST A... BRIEF DETOUR, THAT'S ALL.

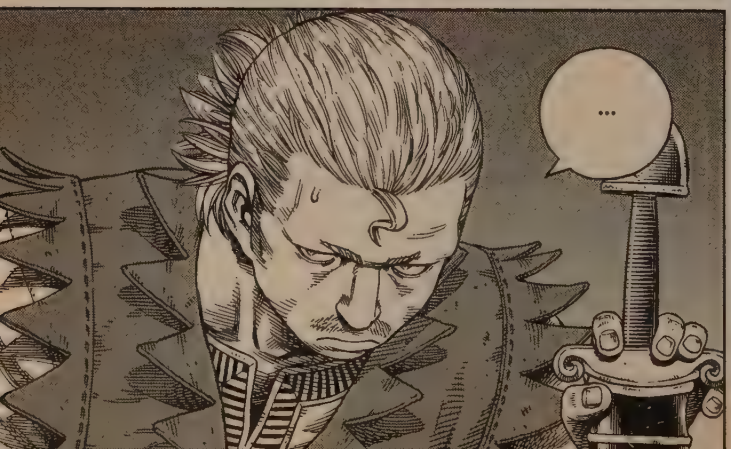

PERHAPS YOUR TRIBUTE PLEASED HIM.
AYE.
I SUPPOSE IT MUST'VE!


ACTUALLY I'M A BIT SURPRISED AS WELL DAD.
HIS MAJESTY IS A VERY BUSY MAN.

EVEN HIS MAJESTY MUST REALIZE THAT THERE'S NO DOWNSIDE TO ALLYING WITH US.
OUR CROPS ARE THE FINEST AND MOST PLENTIFUL IN THE SOUTH.


NOW, OLMAR! BEHAVE YOURSELF! IS THAT UNDER-STOOD?!
THAT'S US.

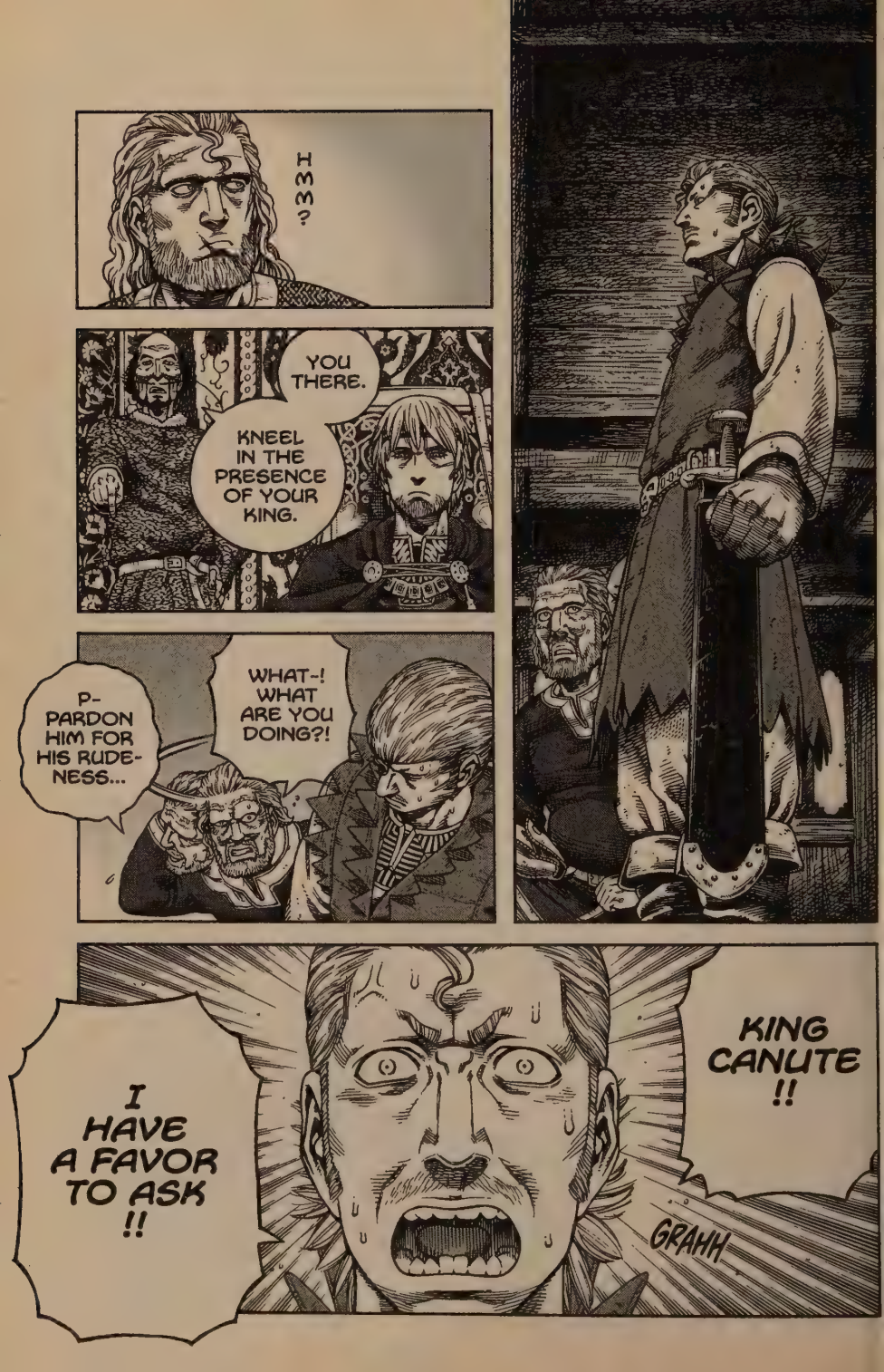
KETIL AND FAMILY!
ENTER THE AUDIENCE HALL.

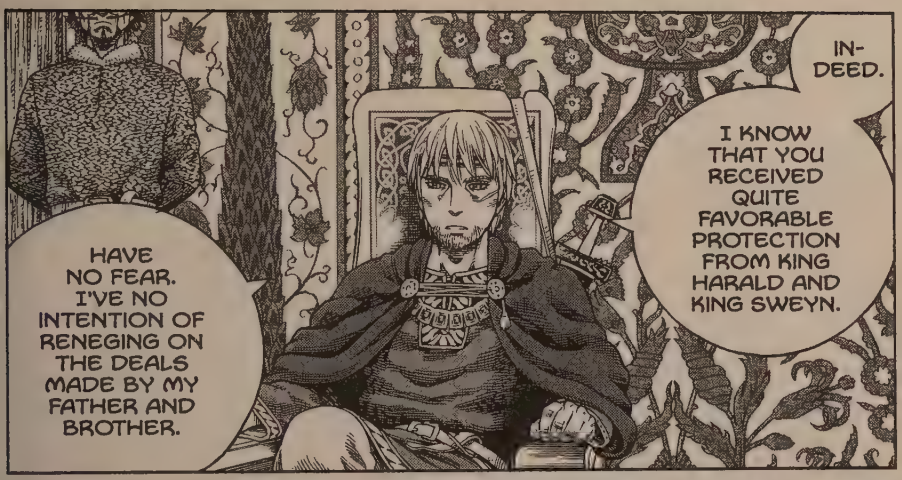

...

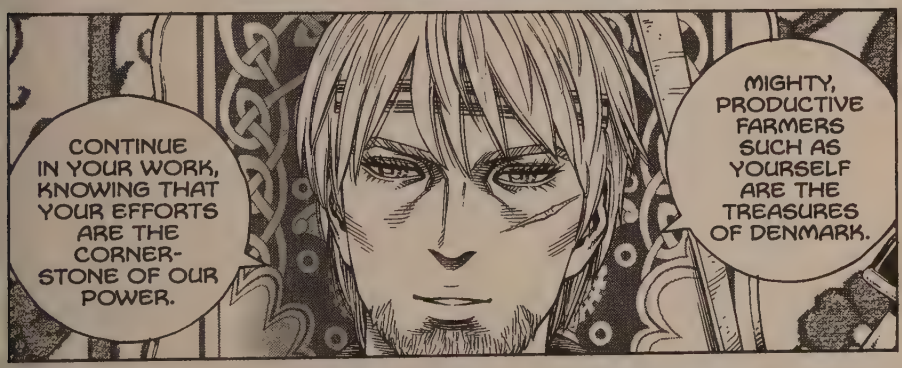
THE NEXT DAY
I ONLY ARRIVED YESTERDAY, AND ALREADY TODAY I'VE GOT MY AUDIENCE WITH KING CANUTE.
WHAT A PLEASANT SURPRISE.
MMM...
HM?
I'M IM-PRESSED.
YOU'VE GOT MORE SWAY WITHIN THE PALACE THAN I REALIZED, THORGIL.

I HAVE SEEN YOUR GIFTS, KETIL.
THEY ARE VERY FINE. I ACCEPT THEM.
Y-YES, YOUR MAJESTY!
YOUR APPROVAL IS AN HONOR OF WHICH I AM MOST UNWORTHY, BUT I AM NONETHELESS VERY GLAD TO RECEIVE IT!
AND WERE THESE ALL PRODUCED BY YOUR FARMLAND?
YES, INDEED!
THIS YEAR WAS A BOUNTIFUL ONE, THANKFULLY...
THE LATE KING HARALD WAS VERY PLEASED WITH OUR OFFERINGS AS WELL, I'M HAPPY TO SAY.
FROM WHAT I UNDERSTAND, HE ENJOYED THE PIGS WE OFFERED FOR YULE EVERY YEAR.

GRINNN


?ƷƷH
YOU THERE.
KNEEL IN THE PRESENCE OF YOUR KING.
WHAT-! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
P-PARDON HIM FOR HIS RUDE-NESS...
KING CANUTE !!
GRAHH
I HAVE A FAVOR TO ASK !!


HAVE NO FEAR. I'VE NO INTENTION OF RENEGING ON THE DEALS MADE BY MY FATHER AND BROTHER.
I KNOW THAT YOU RECEIVED QUITE FAVORABLE PROTECTION FROM KING HARALD AND KING SWEYN.
IN-DEED.


CONTINUE IN YOUR WORK, KNOWING THAT YOUR EFFORTS ARE THE CORNER-STONE OF OUR POWER.
MIGHTY, PRODUCTIVE FARMERS SUCH AS YOURSELF ARE THE TREASURES OF DENMARK.

HM?
I'M GLAD THAT KING CANUTE IS AN UNDER-STANDING MAN...
WHEW!
WELL, THAT'S A RELIEF.
I HOPE THAT I MIGHT CONTINUE TO RELY ON YOUR PATRON-AGE.
TH-THANK YOU, YOUR MAJESTY!

GAHH

SHUT UP AND LEGGO O' ME, OLD MAN!!

YOU BLOODY FOOL!!

LURCH

I JUST WANNA FIGHT!! I'M TIRED OF WASTIN' MY ENTIRE LIFE IN THAT CRAPPY BACK-WATER!!

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA THE DISRESPECT YOU SHOW BY DRAWING YOUR SWORD IN THE KING'S PRESENCE?!

MY GOOD-NESS...

GRAHH

GRAHH

SHUT THE FUCK UP, DAD!

THAT'S IT, BOY! TODAY IS THE LAST STRAW!

STOMP

STOMP

HUH ?

I DO NOT MIND, KETIL.

LET US SEE HIS SKILL WITH THE BLADE.

WHAT SHALL WE DO, MAJES-TY?

ONE OF YOUR THEGNS JUST LIKE MY BIG BRO, IF YOU CAN!!

PLEASE PUT ME IN YOUR ROYAL ARMY!!

I HAVE TRAINED SO MUCH JUST FOR THIS DAY!

I CAN BE OF SERVICE!

JUST WATCH A DEMON-STRATION OF MY-

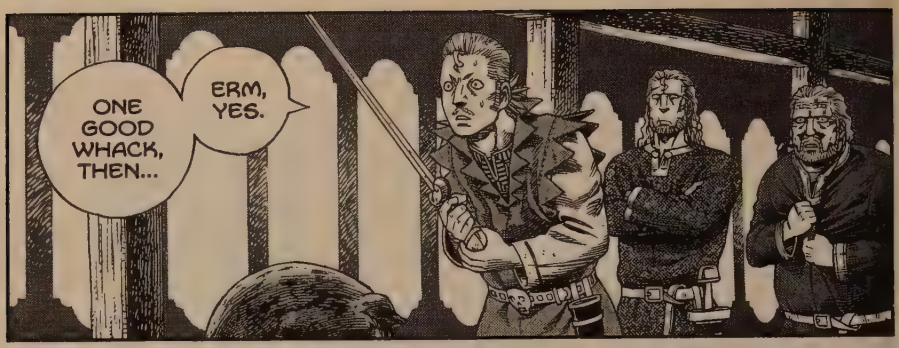
SHING

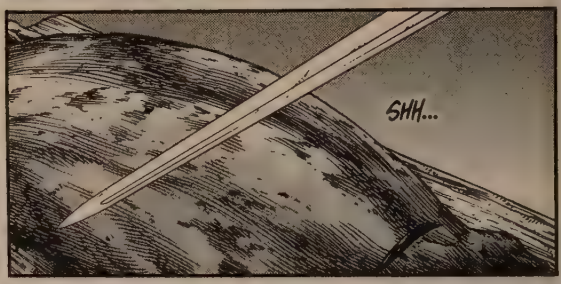
WHA ?

?!

??!

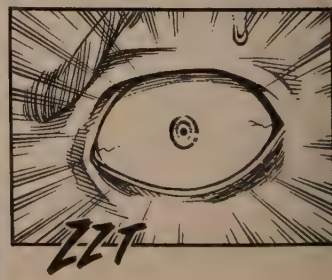
OL... ?!!

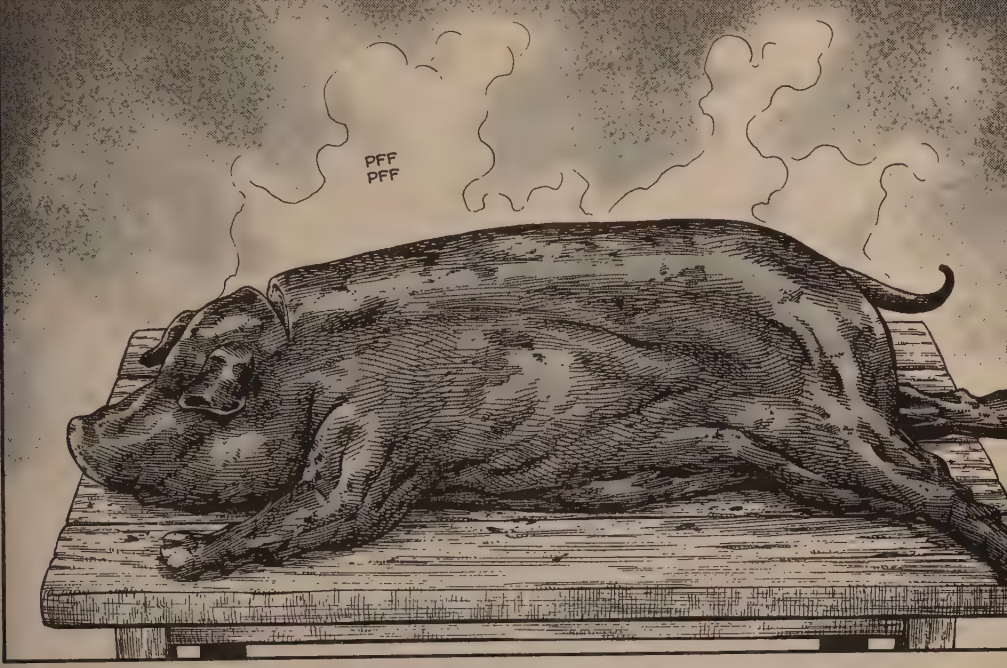

ONE GOOD WHACK, THEN...
ERM, YES.

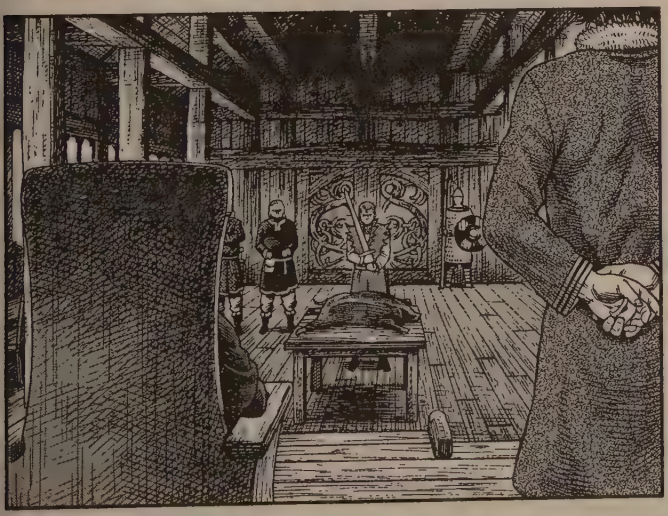

SHH...

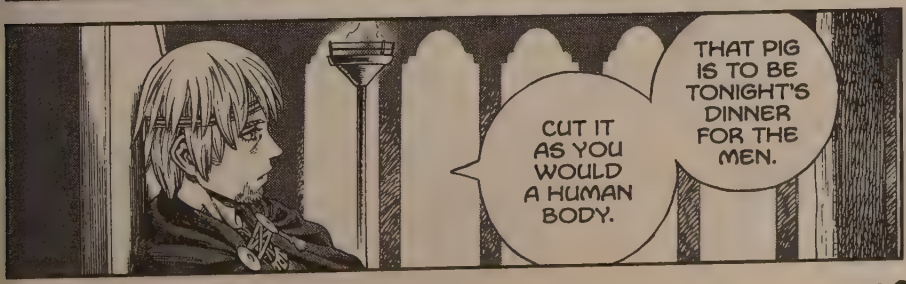
KIYEI-YAAA-AAH!!

PHEWWW...
HAAAA...
FFFFH...
TAP TAP

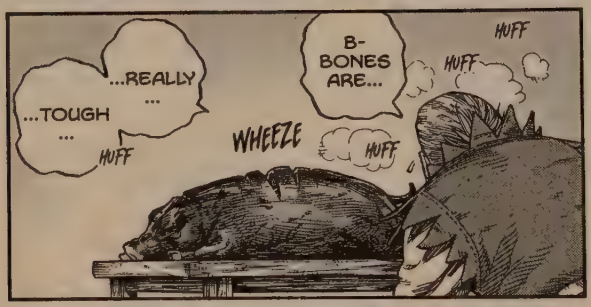

Z-Z-T

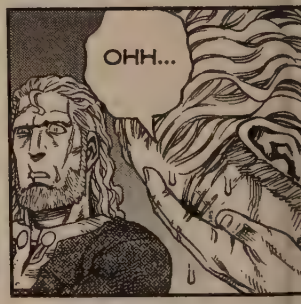

PFF
PFF

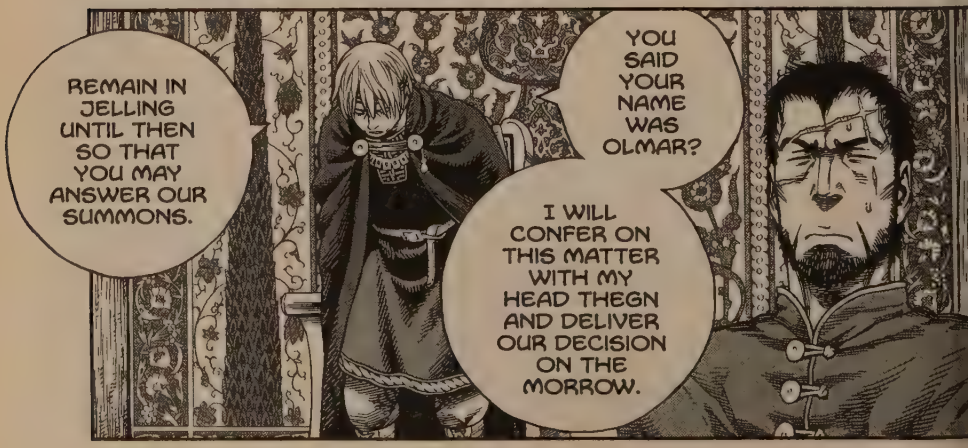


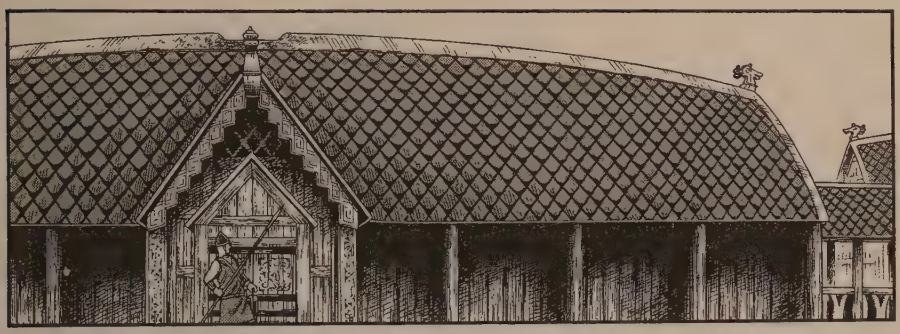

THAT PIG IS TO BE TONIGHT'S DINNER FOR THE MEN.
CUT IT AS YOU WOULD A HUMAN BODY.

GRUAAAHHH
ENOUGH.
THAT WILL DO.
ZZK ZZK ZZK ZZK
SHK SHK SHK SHK
TUKA TUKA TUKA TUKA
CREAK CREAK



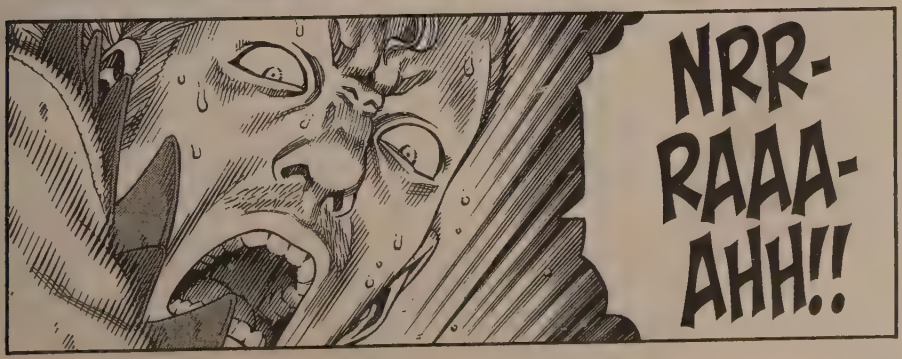


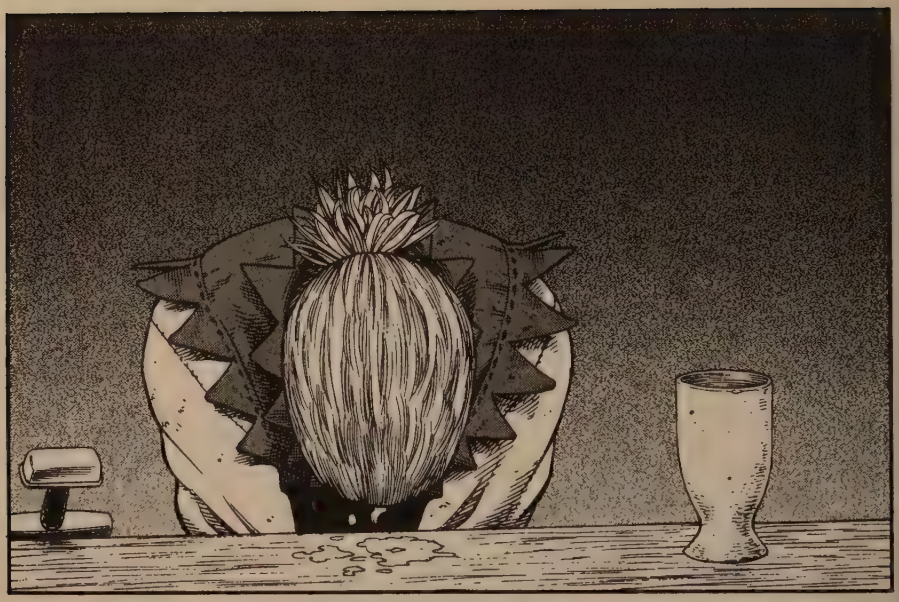


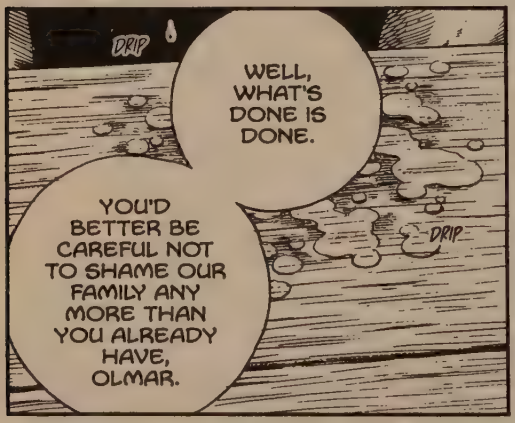


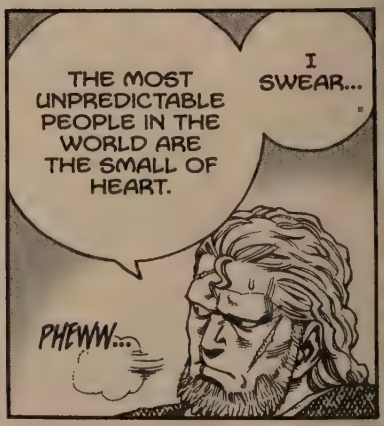
WHAT THE?
MUTTER
WHAT'S THAT?
CHU-WAAA!!
TSUI-EEIIH!!

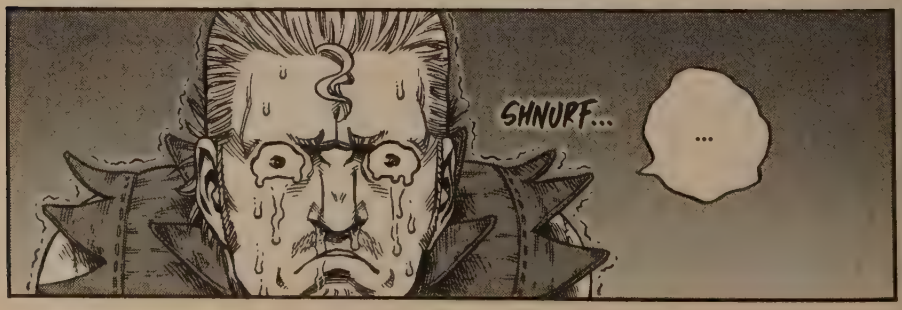
WHAT'S GOING ON?
NO IDEA...
FGGIN GAHH!! SUNNUVA BRRH!!
HRYAA! URAA!
EVERY-THING, OKAY?
HRGAH!! TAKE THAT!!
DWAA!! HIYAAH!!

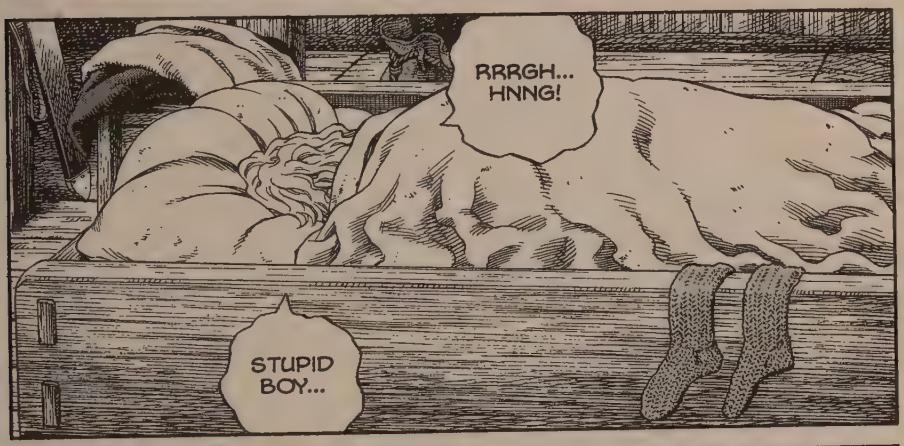

NRR-RAAA-AHH!!



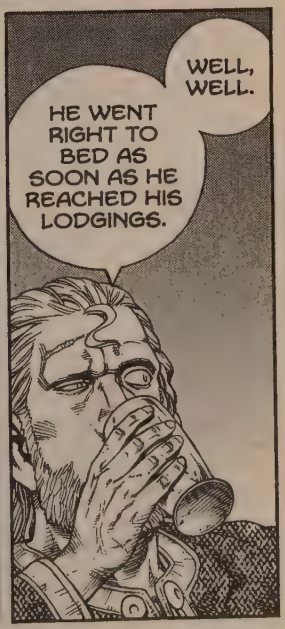

DRIP
WELL, WHAT'S DONE IS DONE.
YOU'D BETTER BE CAREFUL NOT TO SHAME OUR FAMILY ANY MORE THAN YOU ALREADY HAVE, OLMAR.
DRIP


THE MOST UNPREDICTABLE PEOPLE IN THE WORLD ARE THE SMALL OF HEART.
I SWEAR...
PHEWW...

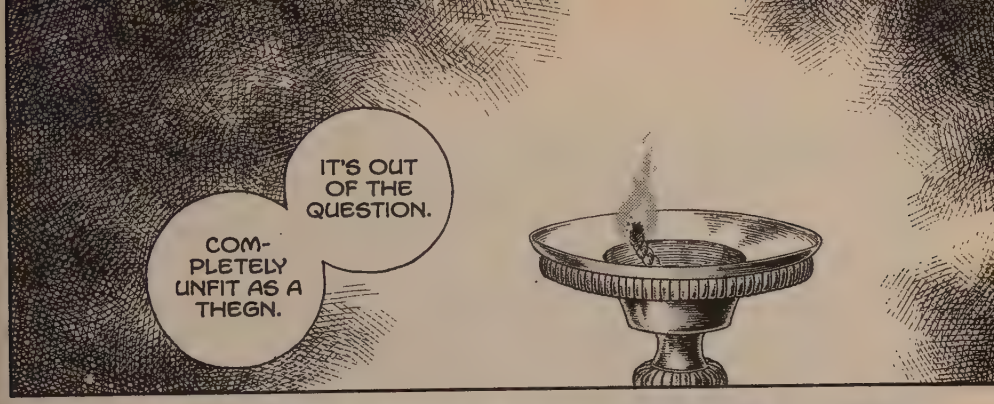

SHNURF...
...

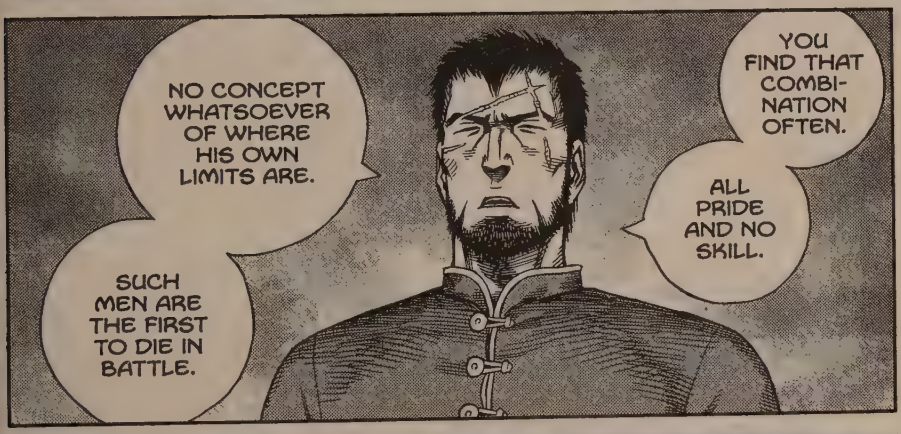

RRRGH... HNNG!
STUPID BOY...

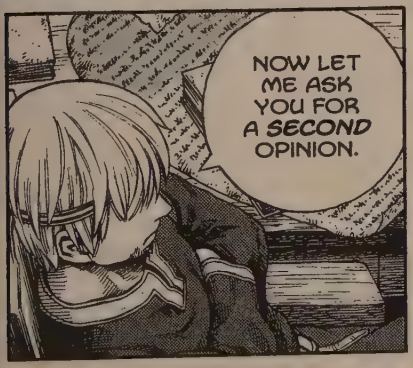
YOU'VE REALLY DONE IT NOW, OLMAR.
I'LL NEVER HEAR THE END OF IT FROM THE OTHER WARRIORS AFTER THIS.

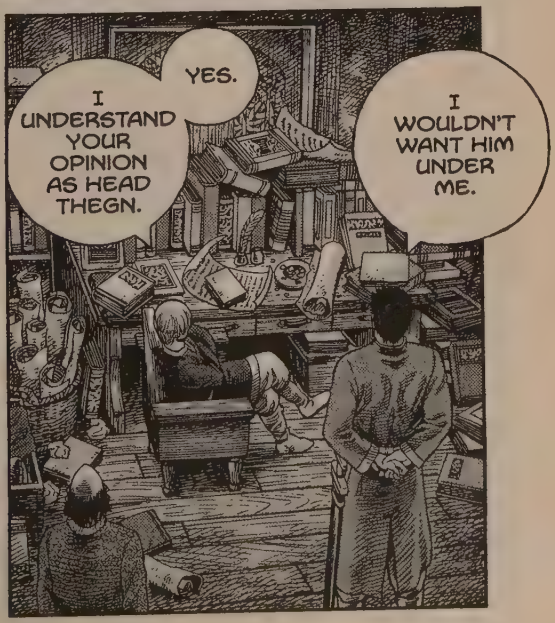

WELL, WELL.
HE WENT RIGHT TO BED AS SOON AS HE REACHED HIS LODGINGS.

...WILL BE VERY USEFUL.
I THINK THE LAD...
THE TYPICAL NORSE YOUTH, AND DULL-WITTED TO BOOT.
HE WILL DANCE PERFECTLY TO OUR TUNE.
...INDEED.
USEFUL.
IT'S BEFORE THE CORONATION, BUT WE CANNOT LET THIS OPPORTUNITY PASS US BY.
YES, WE'LL BEGIN AT ONCE.
THEN WE WILL PROCEED WITH THE PLAN...?

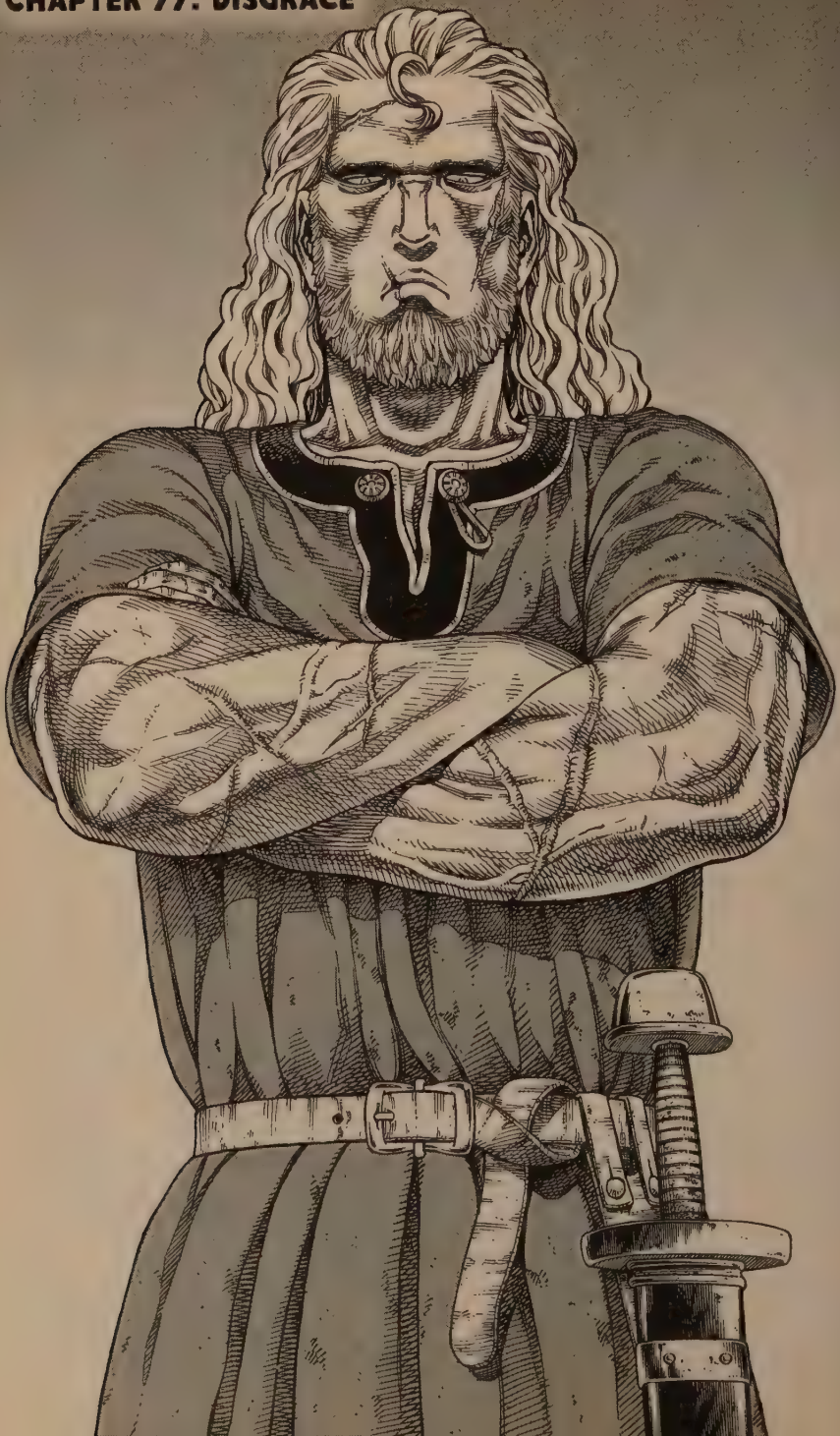

IT'S OUT OF THE QUESTION.
COMPLETELY UNFIT AS A THEGN.

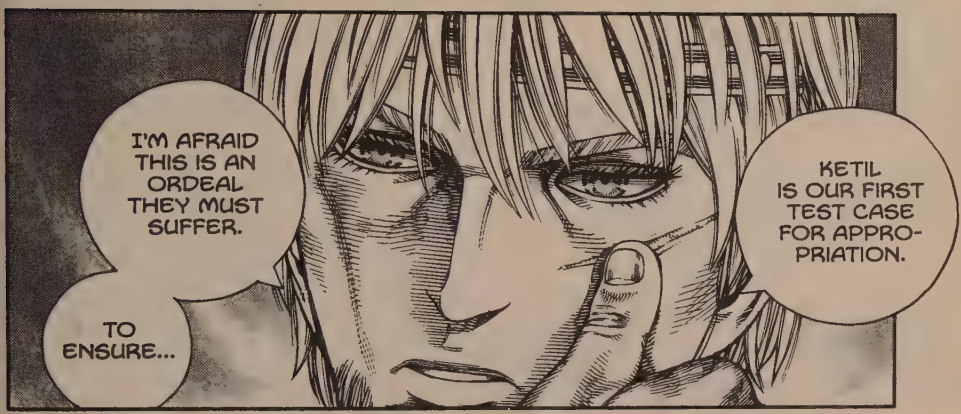

NO CONCEPT WHATSOEVER OF WHERE HIS OWN LIMITS ARE.
SUCH MEN ARE THE FIRST TO DIE IN BATTLE.
YOU FIND THAT COMBINATION OFTEN.
ALL PRIDE AND NO SKILL.


NOW LET ME ASK YOU FOR A *SECOND* OPINION.


YES.
I UNDERSTAND YOUR OPINION AS HEAD THEGN.
I WOULDN'T WANT HIM UNDER ME.

CHAPTER 77: DISGRACE





...PEACE FOR ALL.

CHAPTER 76 - END

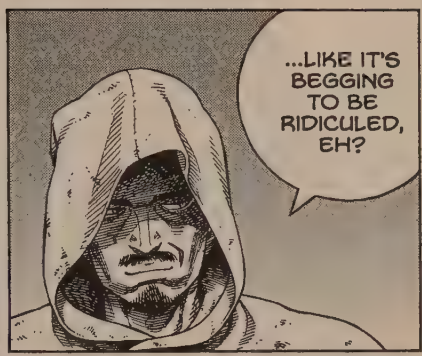
BWA HA HA HA HA
"THE MAN WHO COULDN'T BEAT A DEAD PIG."
NEVER THOUGHT I'D SEE ONE FOR MYSELF!
YES. SIMPLY TELL HIM.
THAT IS YOUR JOB.
CLINK
GEH HA HA HA HA HA HA
I'M JUST AMAZED HE ACTUALLY THOUGHT HE COULD JOIN HIS MAJESTY'S THEGNS.
ON THE CONTRARY, HIS COURAGE IS ADMIRABLE.
SO I JUST HAVE TO PASS ON THE NEWS THEN?
THAT HE FAILED.
HMMM... WELL, THAT CAN BE DONE...
BUT I CAN'T GUARANTEE THAT I'LL BE ABLE TO HOLD BACK FROM MORE.
PFFT!
JUST LOOK AT HIS GORMLESS FACE...

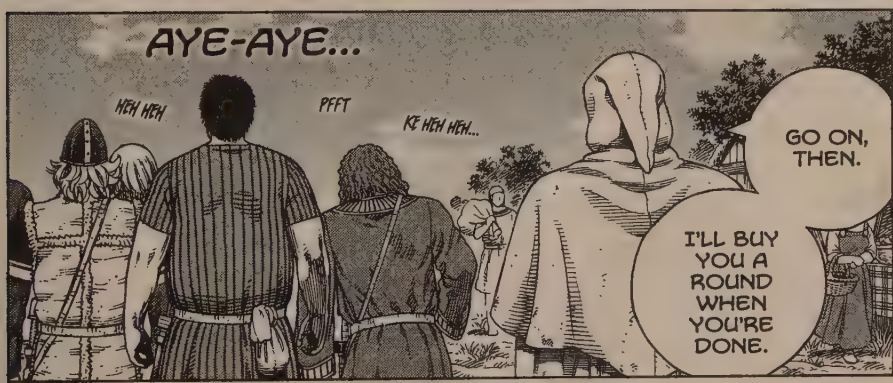
WHO? WHERE?
THE ONE LYING DOWN ON THE TABLE...?
YES, THAT'S THE BOY.

AH, I SEE, I SEE.
HA HA HA HA! YES, HE'S GOT THAT DULL LOOK IN HIS EYES.
NOW THAT I SEE HIM, IT ALL MAKES SENSE.

PST
...YOU'RE NO BETTER THAN HIM.
WHEN IT COMES TO GORM-LESS FACES...
PARDON ME, OLMAR.
MIGHT I HAVE A MOMENT ?

HEE HEE...
KE HEH HEH...
WELL, I MEAN... HE LOST...
...TO A PIG...

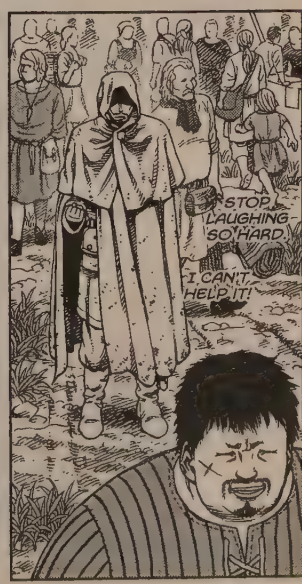

...LIKE IT'S BEGGING TO BE RIDICULED, EH?

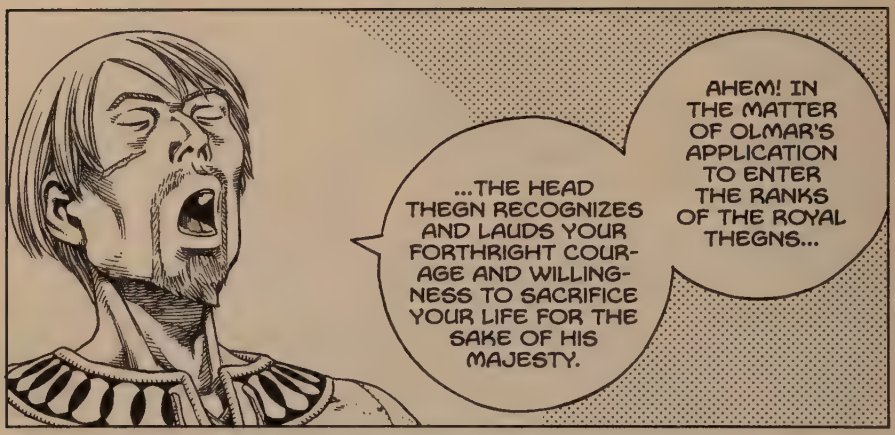

AYE-AYE...
HEH HEH
PFFT
KE HEH HEH...
GO ON, THEN.
I'LL BUY YOU A ROUND WHEN YOU'RE DONE.

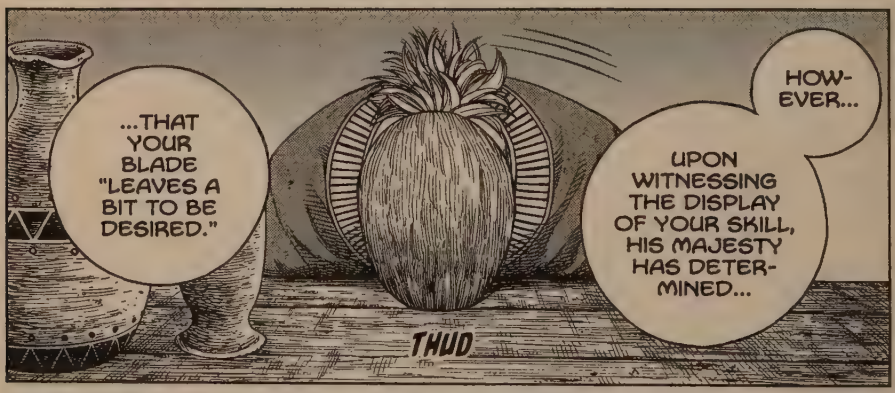
FLIT
FLIT

BING

HMPH.

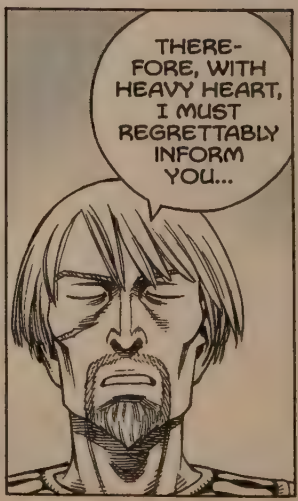

STOP LAUGHING SO HARD!
I CAN'T HELP IT!

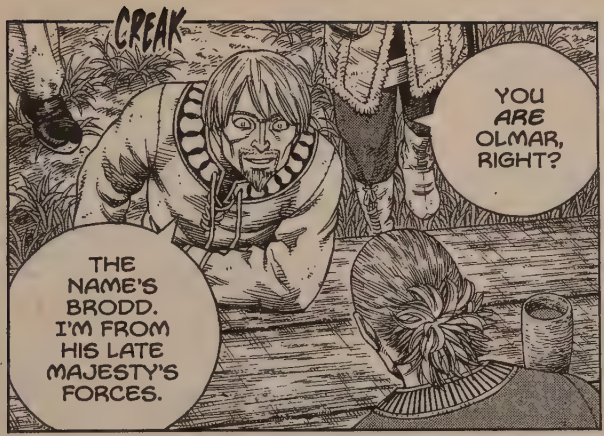

AHEM! IN THE MATTER OF OLMAR'S APPLICATION TO ENTER THE RANKS OF THE ROYAL THEGNS...
...THE HEAD THEGN RECOGNIZES AND LAUDS YOUR FORTHRIGHT COURAGE AND WILLINGNESS TO SACRIFICE YOUR LIFE FOR THE SAKE OF HIS MAJESTY.

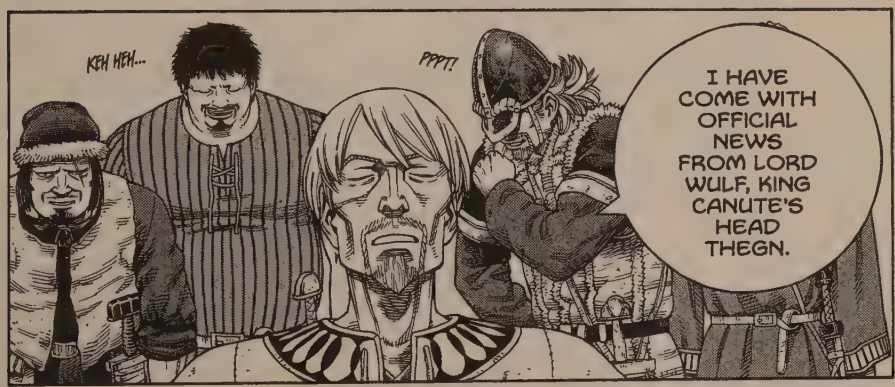

...THAT YOUR BLADE "LEAVES A BIT TO BE DESIRED."
HOWEVER...
UPON WITNESSING THE DISPLAY OF YOUR SKILL, HIS MAJESTY HAS DETERMINED...
THUD

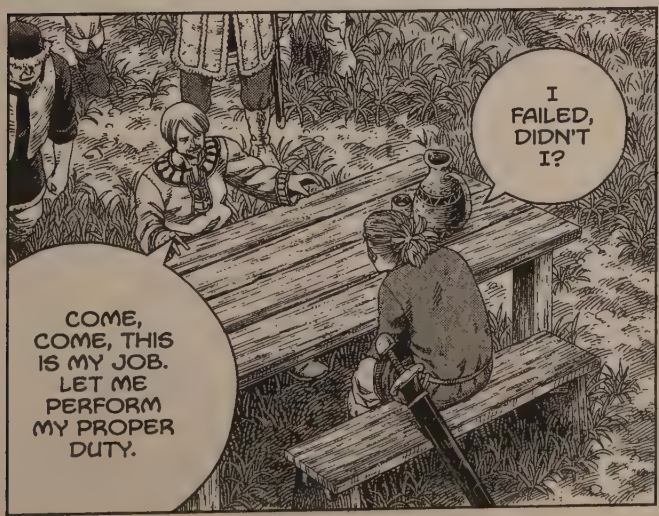
HRRB!
PFFF!
HEH-HEH-HEH!

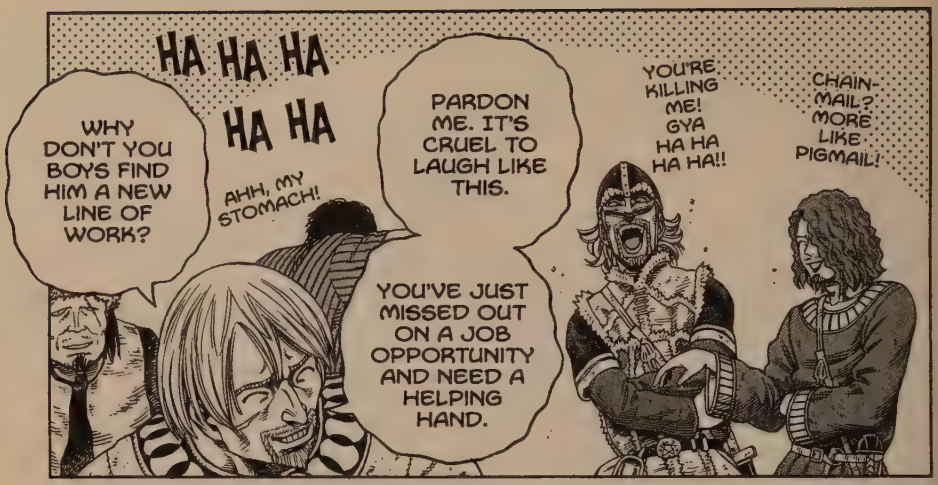
HNK!

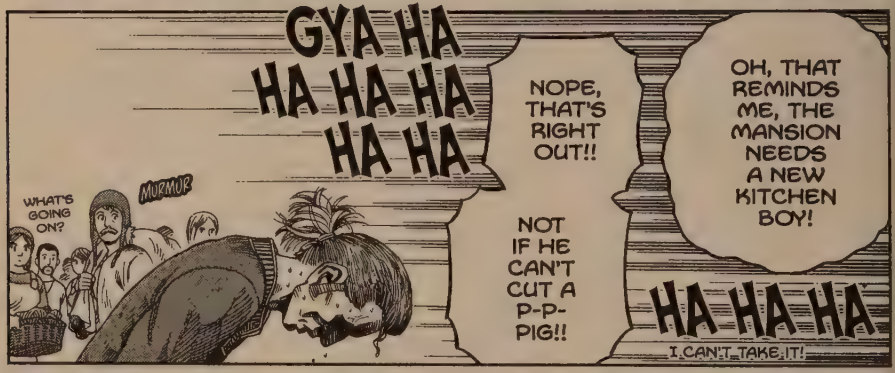

THEREFORE, WITH HEAVY HEART, I MUST REGRETTABLY INFORM YOU...

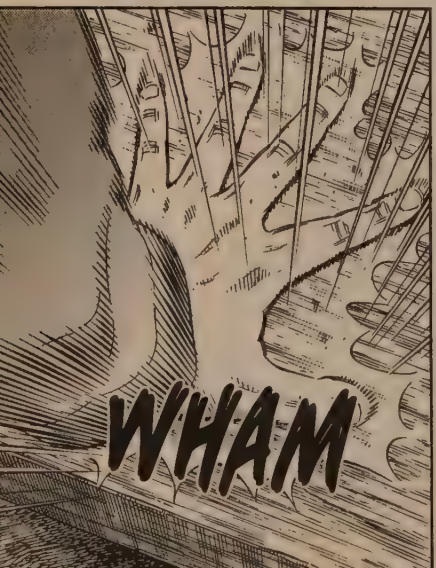

CREAK
YOU ARE OLMAR, RIGHT?
THE NAME'S BRODD. I'M FROM HIS LATE MAJESTY'S FORCES.

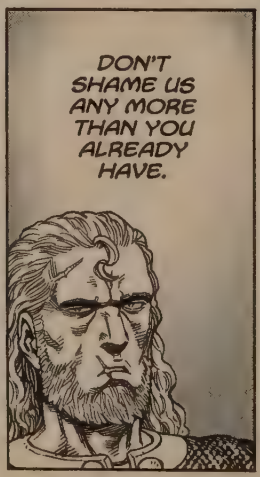

KEH HEH...
PPPT!
I HAVE COME WITH OFFICIAL NEWS FROM LORD WULF, KING CANUTE'S HEAD THEGN.

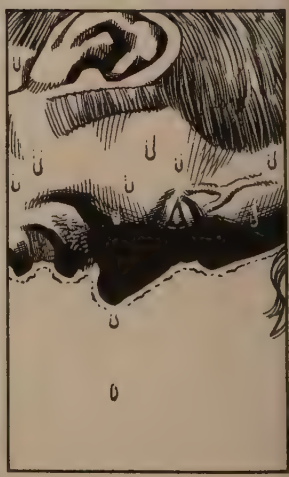

I FAILED, DIDN'T I?
COME, COME, THIS IS MY JOB. LET ME PERFORM MY PROPER DUTY.


HA HA HA
HA HA
WHY DON'T YOU BOYS FIND HIM A NEW LINE OF WORK?
AHH, MY STOMACH!
PARDON ME. IT'S CRUEL TO LAUGH LIKE THIS.
YOU'VE JUST MISSED OUT ON A JOB OPPORTUNITY AND NEED A HELPING HAND.
YOU'RE KILLING ME! GYA HA HA HA!!
CHAIN-MAIL? MORE LIKE PIGMAIL!


GYA HA HA HA HA HA HA
WHAT'S GOING ON?
MURMUR
NOPE, THAT'S RIGHT OUT!!
NOT IF HE CAN'T CUT A P-P-PIG!!
OH, THAT REMINDS ME, THE MANSION NEEDS A NEW KITCHEN BOY!
HA HA HA
I CAN'T TAKE IT!


WHAM


DON'T SHAME US ANY MORE THAN YOU ALREADY HAVE.



AAAA HA HA HA HA

STOP, YOU'RE KILLING ME! I'M GONNA GET A CRAMP!!

OH HELL, IT AIN'T REGRETTABLE IN THE LEAST! YOU LOST TO A DEAD PIG!!

HA HA

GYA HA HA HA HA HA!

HEEE HA HA HA!

C-CAN'T BREATHE! HA HA HA!

AHA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

EXPLAIN IT TO ME!

W-WHY? WHAT WAS WRONG? WAS IT WEARING SOLID CHAINMAIL?

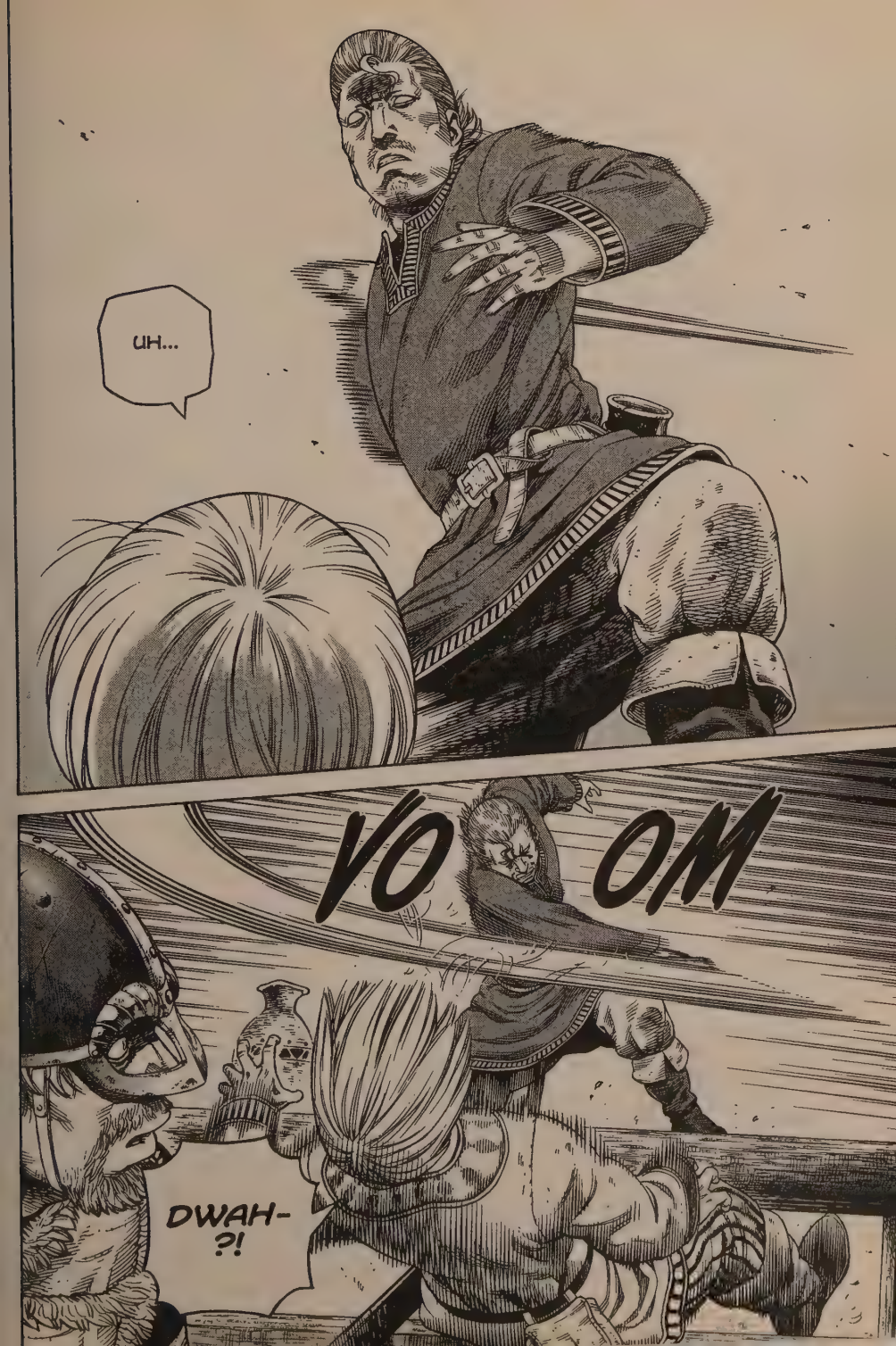
I HEAR YOU C...COULDN'T CUT THROUGH A PIG?! IS THAT...IS THAT TRUE?!

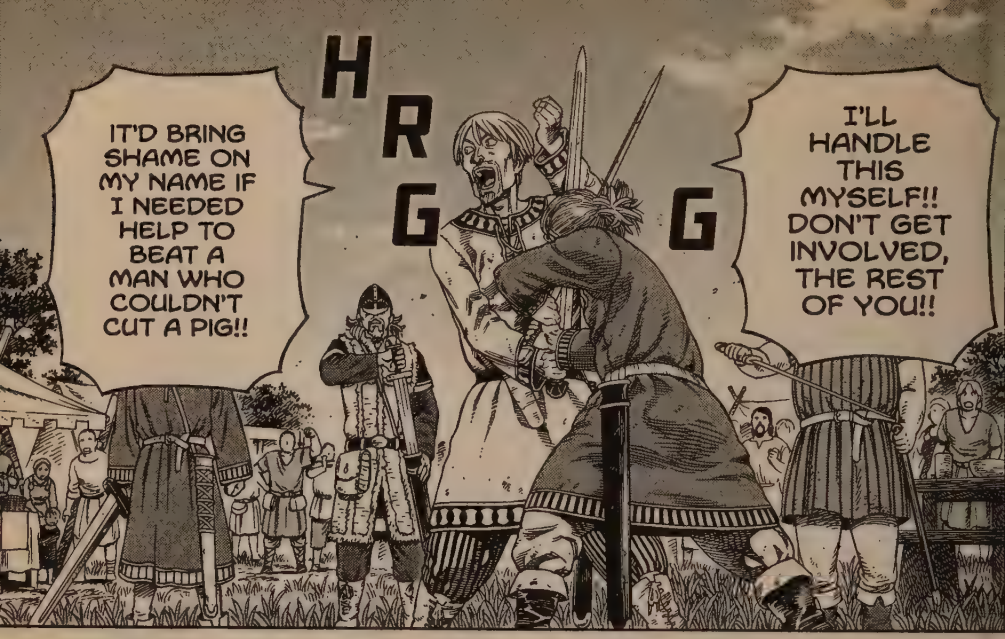
WHEE-EEZE!

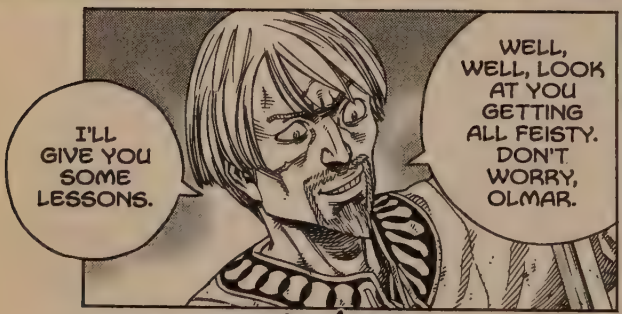
HPPT
BWA HA HA
HA HA HA HA HA
I'M DYING!
PLEASE, NO MORE!
HYA HYA!
I-I THINK I'M GONNA DIE!! OF LAUGH-TER!!
AHA HA HA
AHA HA HA-HA-HA
HEEE HA HA!
HELP ME!
I'M DYING!
COULDN'T EVEN CUT THROUGH A PIG!!
EVEN THOUGH... HE COULDN'T CUT...A P-P-PIG!!
OOOO
WHEEZ
WHEEZ
STO MP

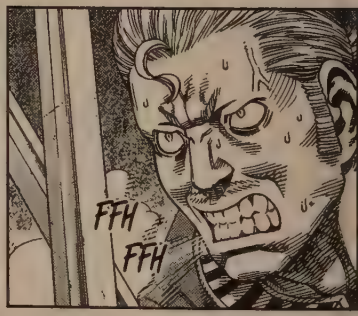
ZWING
DRAW!!
A REAL WARRIOR RESPONDS TO DISGRACE WITH HIS SWORD!!

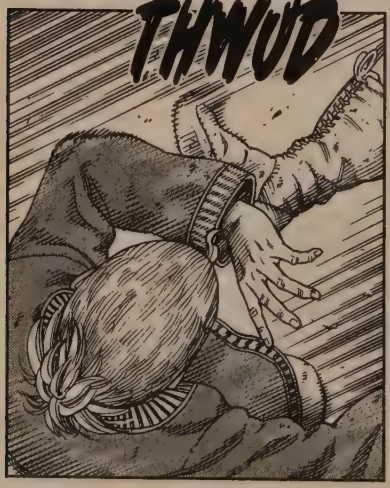
FFFFH
AWFUL RUDE WAY TO ACT FOR SUCH A WEAKLING!!
WHAT WAS THAT?!
ZSH
HOH!
WHOA!
VWOOM
VUMM
YAAA-AHHH!!

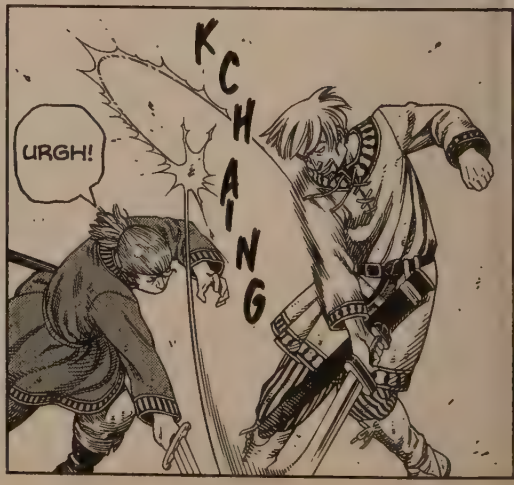

UH...
VO OM
DWAH-
?!

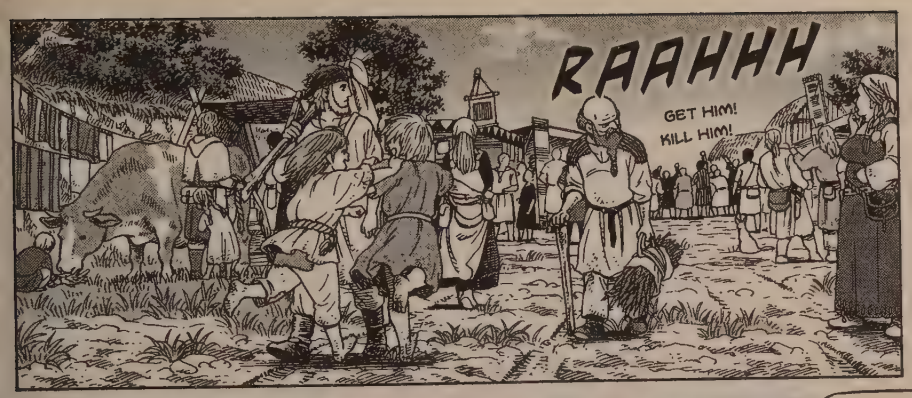

IT'D BRING SHAME ON MY NAME IF I NEEDED HELP TO BEAT A MAN WHO COULDN'T CUT A PIG!!
HRGG
I'LL HANDLE THIS MYSELF!! DON'T GET INVOLVED, THE REST OF YOU!!


I'LL GIVE YOU SOME LESSONS.
WELL, WELL, LOOK AT YOU GETTING ALL FEISTY. DON'T WORRY, OLMAR.

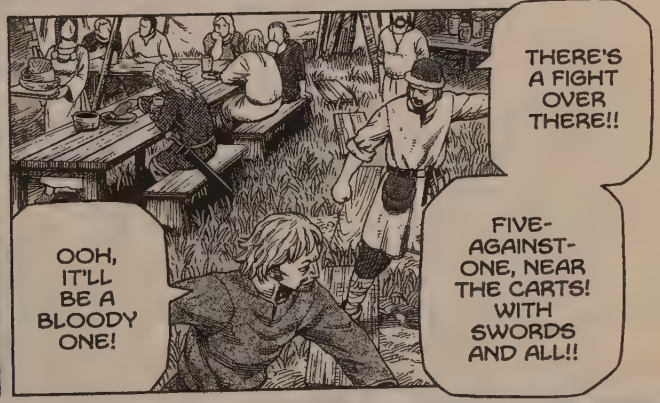

FFH
FFH


THWUD


URGH!
KCHANG


RAAHHH
GET HIM!
KILL HIM!

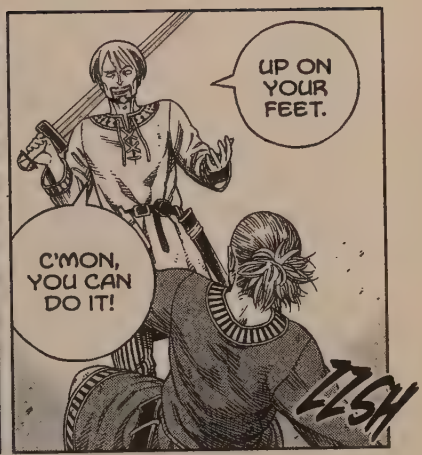
MUNCH

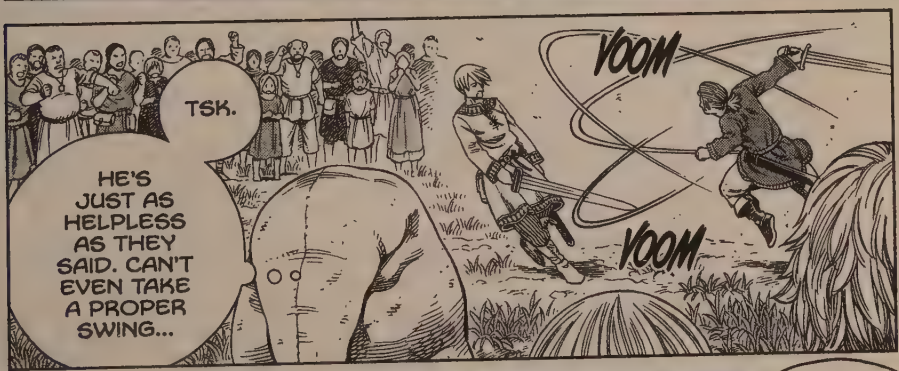

THERE'S A FIGHT OVER THERE!!
OOH, IT'LL BE A BLOODY ONE!
FIVE-AGAINST-ONE, NEAR THE CARTS! WITH SWORDS AND ALL!!

GRRGGG
SHOW HIM HELL, LAD!
DO IT!!
GUT HIM GOOD!

SHUD
HO!
BWUGH!
STAND UP, OLMAR.
A MAN DOESN'T ROLL AROUND ON THE GROUND DURING BATTLE.
D...
DAM-MIT...
HUFF HUFF
FFH HUFF
KTHUD
BROTHER...

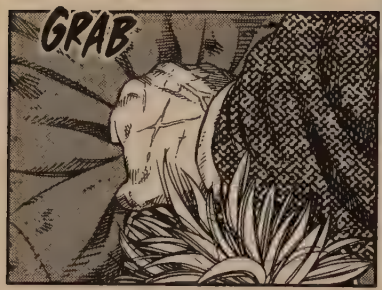
YAAAHH


UP ON YOUR FEET.
C'MON, YOU CAN DO IT!
ZZSH

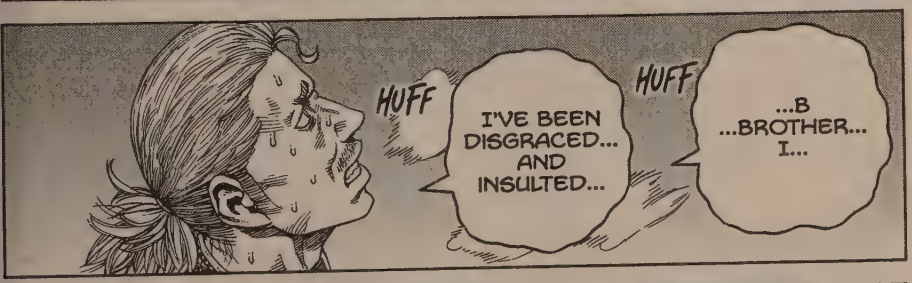

TSK.
HE'S JUST AS HELPLESS AS THEY SAID. CAN'T EVEN TAKE A PROPER SWING...
VOOM
VOOM

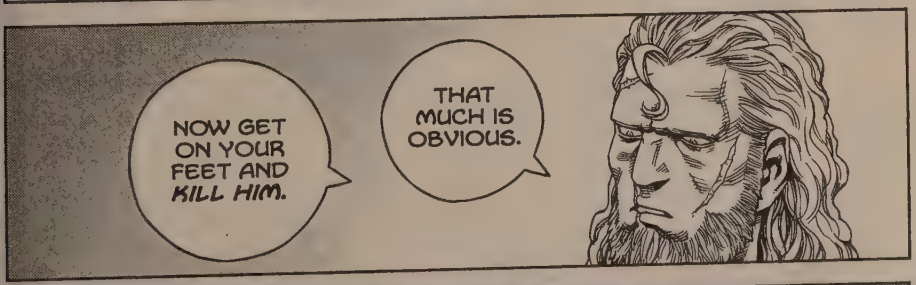
VWUSH

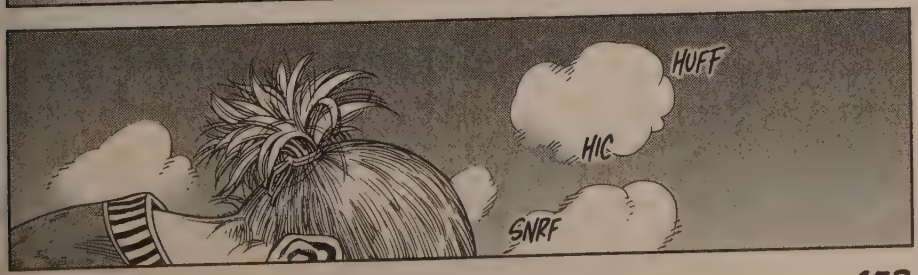
WE REALLY NEED HIM TO LAND AT LEAST ONE GOOD BLOW.
CAN'T SELL THE ACT WITHOUT IT...



I SAID, ON YOUR FUCK-ING FEET, OLMAR !!

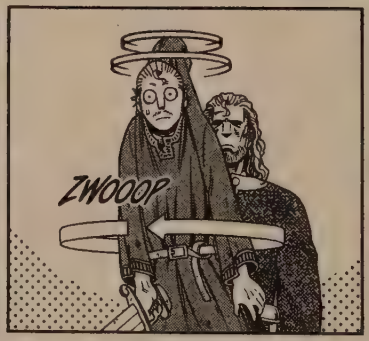

HUFF
I'VE BEEN DISGRACED... AND INSULTED...
HUFF
...B ...BROTHER... I...

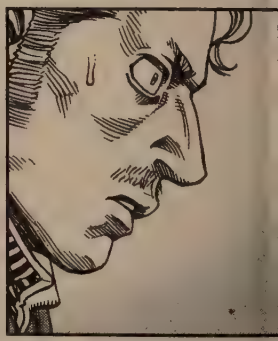

NOW GET ON YOUR FEET AND KILL HIM.
THAT MUCH IS OBVIOUS.


HUFF
HIC
SNRF

FIGHT, AND BE A MAN.

TODAY IS THE DAY.

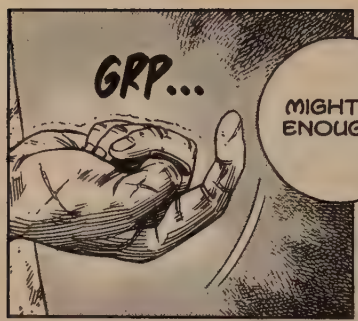


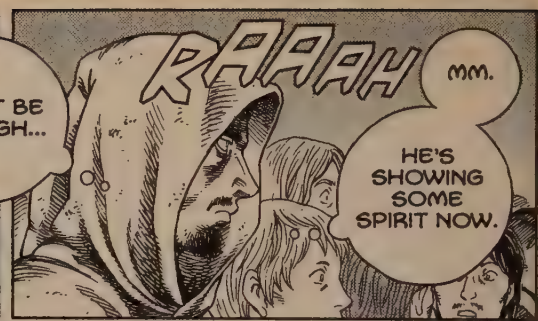


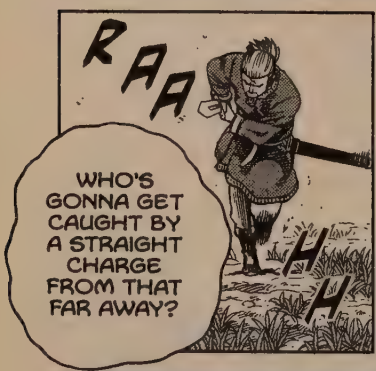
IMAGINE!! SEE HIM CRY WITH REGRET IN A POOL OF BLOOD, HIS ENTRAILS STREWN AROUND HIM!!

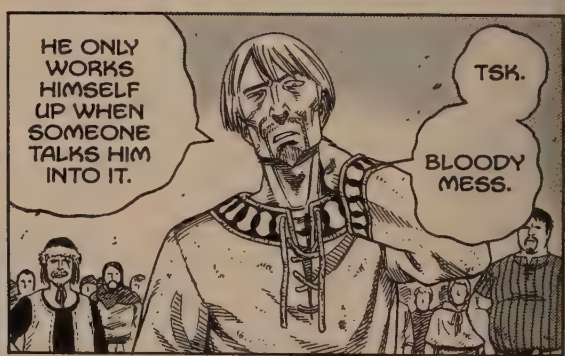
SEE THE IMAGE IN YOUR MIND, OLMAR!! ENVISION YOURSELF LOPPING HIS HEAD FROM HIS SHOUL-DERS!!

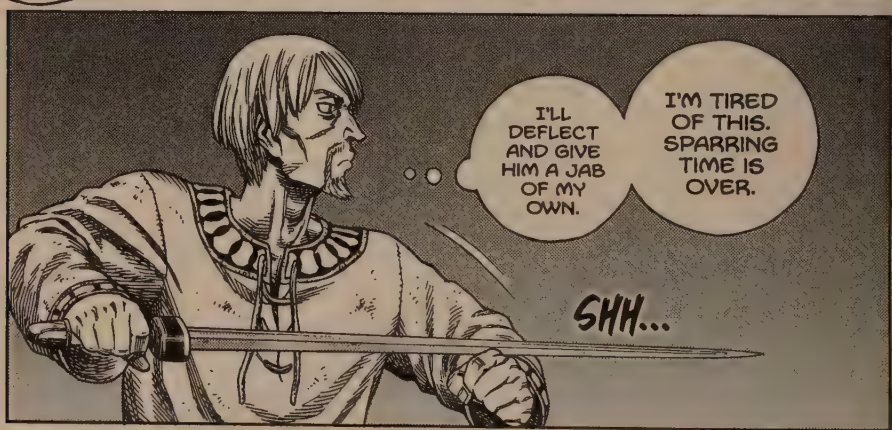
...WHAT'S WITH HIM? SCARY...
DID HE CALL HIM BROTHER?
GULP...
LISTEN TO ME, OLMAR: A WARRIOR WHO HAS BEEN DISGRACED HAS TWO OPTIONS.
KILL.
OR DIE.
IF THERE'S ONE THING I WON'T STAND FOR FROM YOU, IT'S CONTINUING TO LIVE WITH THAT DISGRACE ON YOUR SHOULDERS.
IF YOU CAN'T KILL HIM, YOU DIE HERE.


GRP...
MIGHT BE ENOUGH...


RAAAH
MM.
HE'S SHOWING SOME SPIRIT NOW.


RAA
HH
WHO'S GONNA GET CAUGHT BY A STRAIGHT CHARGE FROM THAT FAR AWAY?


HE ONLY WORKS HIMSELF UP WHEN SOMEONE TALKS HIM INTO IT.
TSK.
BLOODY MESS.


I'LL DEFLECT AND GIVE HIM A JAB OF MY OWN.
I'M TIRED OF THIS. SPARRING TIME IS OVER.
SHH...

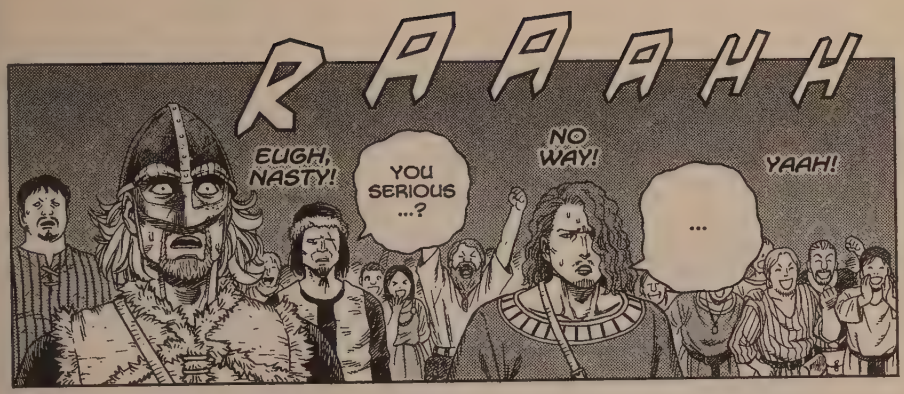
FIP

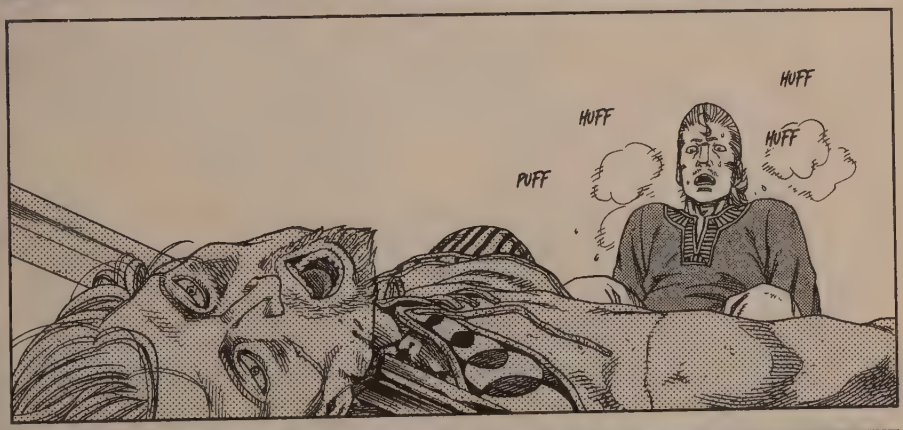
SLAUGH-TER HIM!!
HUFF
KILL HIM!!
HUFF
RAAA
GO !!!
HH

RAAAHH
?!
WHAT JUST...?
YEAH!
GOT HIM!!

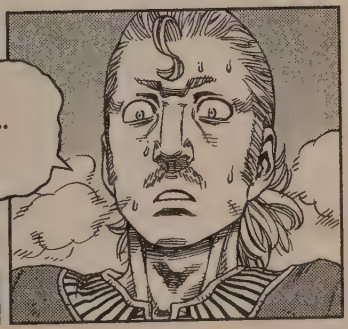
TCHK
HKK-
?!
SHUKK
RAA-HH!!

SHUAA
SHING
WE CLEANSE THIS STAIN RIGHT HERE AND NOW!!
HE DOESN'T LEAVE THIS PLACE ALIVE!!
ZWAAA
I'LL HANDLE THE REST.
THAT'S MY LITTLE BROTHER.
WELL DONE, OLMAR.
ZSH...


RAAAHH
EUGH, NASTY!
YOU SERIOUS ...?
NO WAY!
YAAH!
...


HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
PUFF

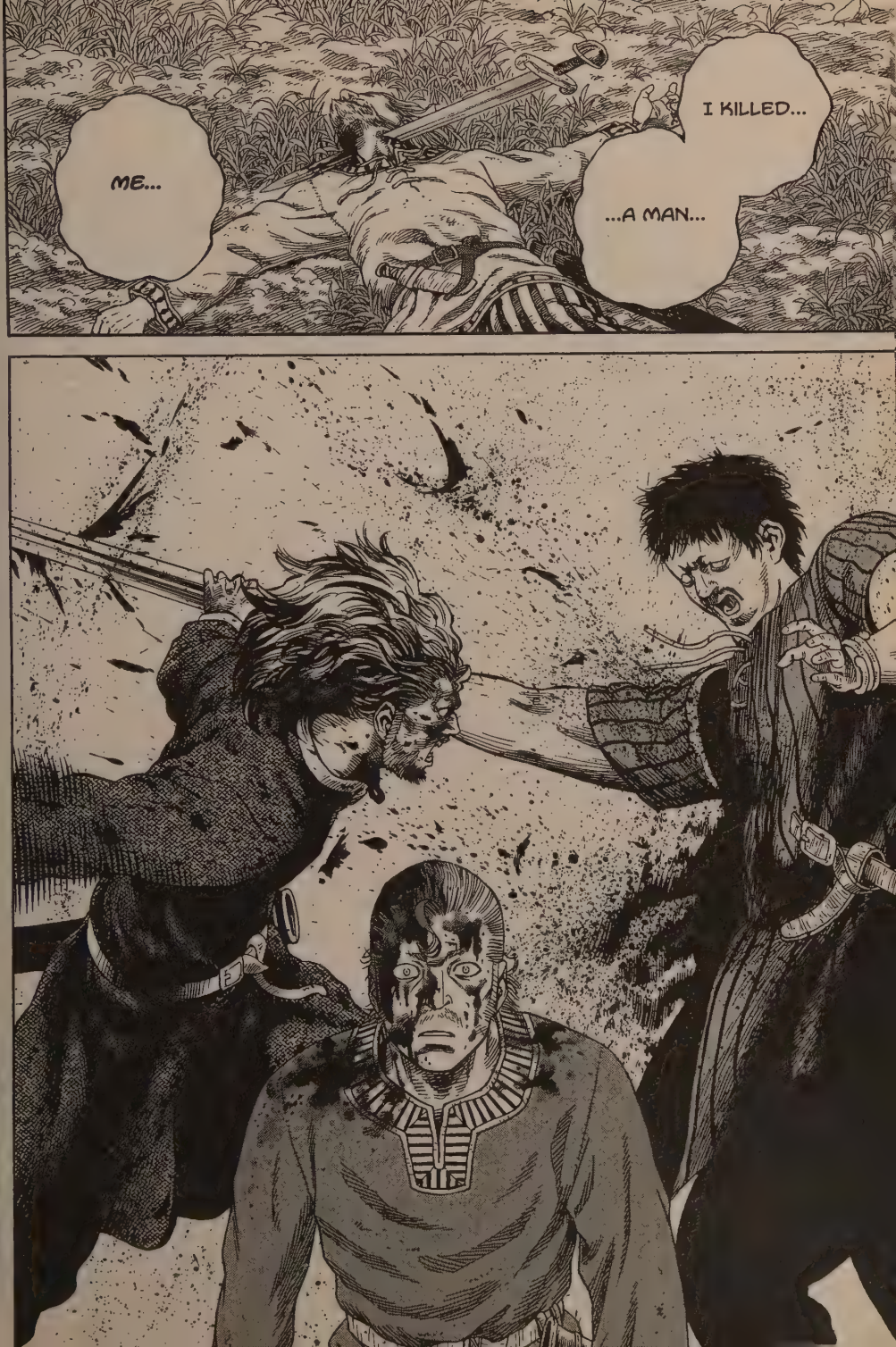
...
WHAT ...?



OOOHH

BSHT
EE-YAAA!!
SHUCK
SPLATCH
AAAH!
SHUK
DSHH
SPLATT

CHAPTER 78: TREASON

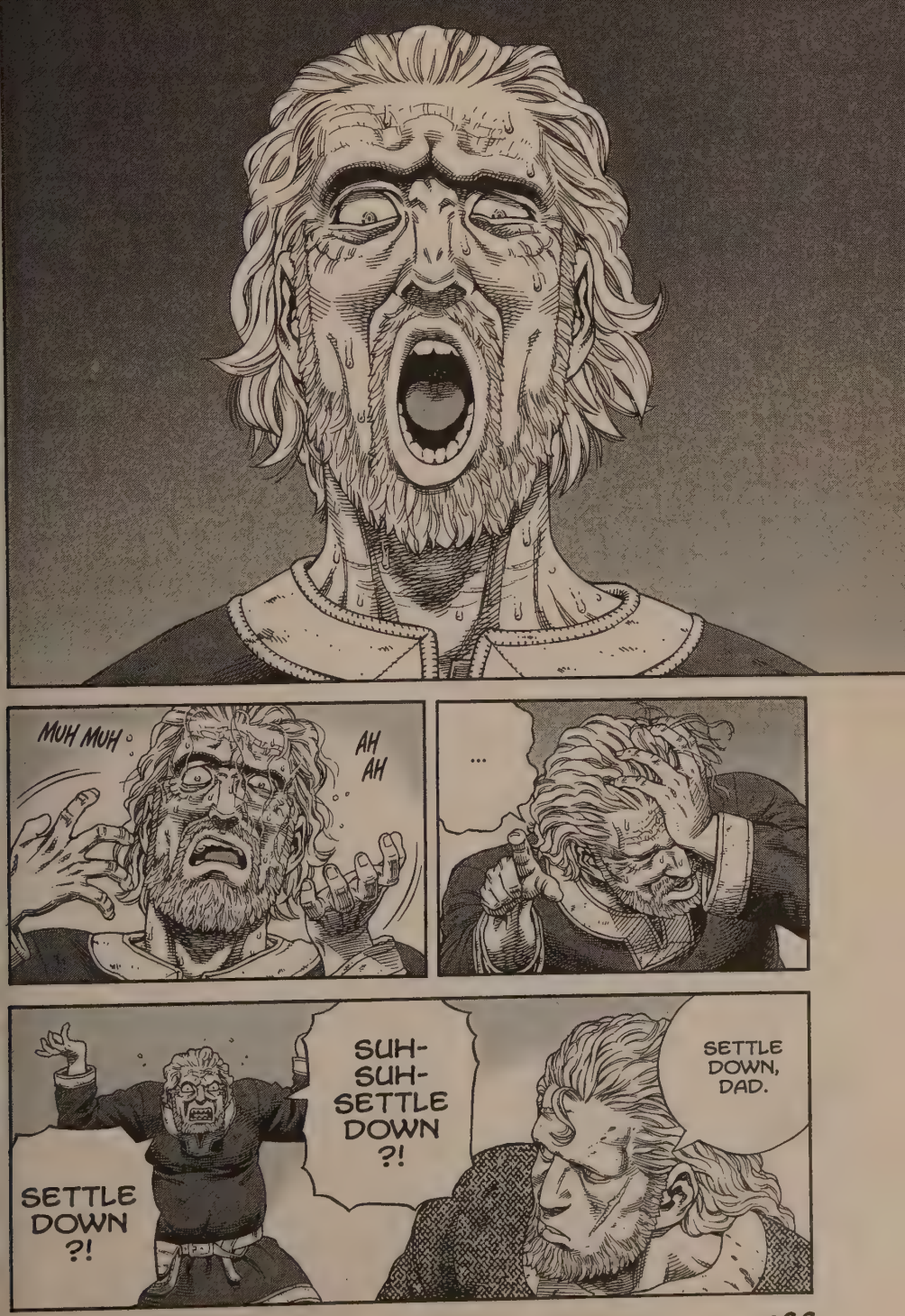


CHAPTER 77 - END

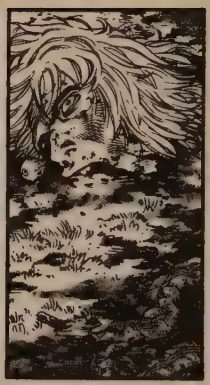
WHAT HAVE YOU TWO DONE?! HOW... HOW CAN THIS-?!

YOU KILLED... YOU KILLED THE KING'S MESSEN-GERS!!

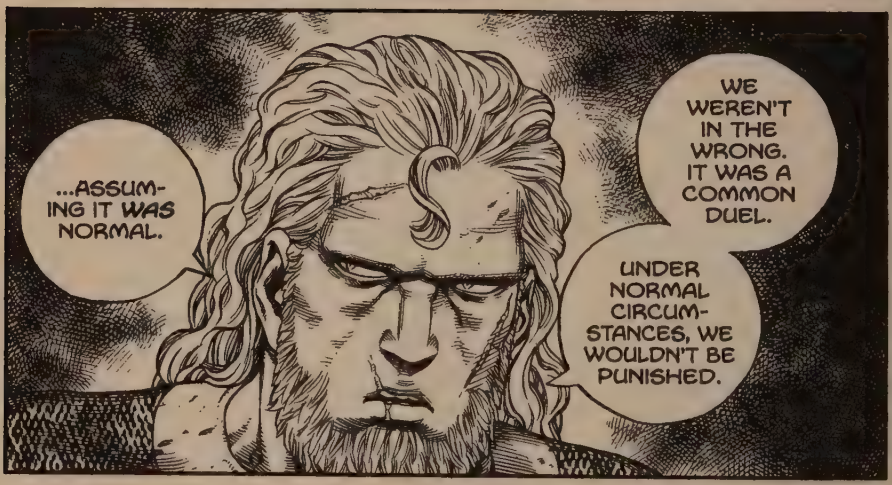
OLMAR, THORGIL, WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY FOR YOUR-SELVES?!

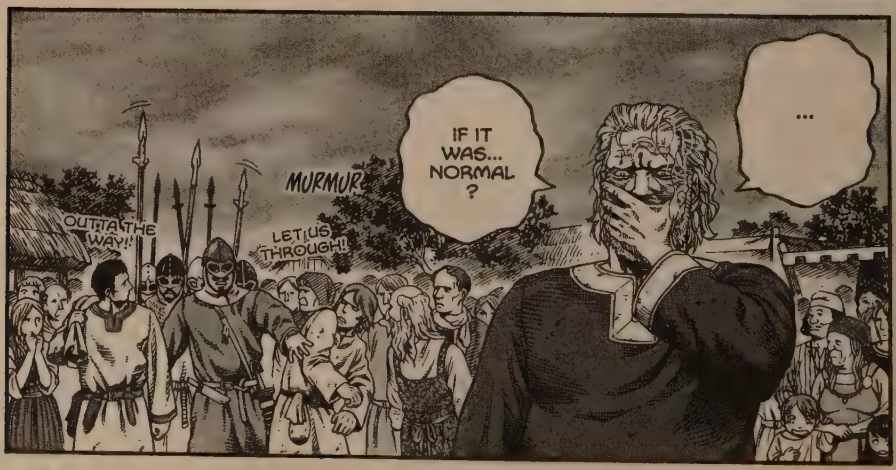

MUH MUH
AH AH
...
SETTLE DOWN ?!
SUH-SUH-SETTLE DOWN ?!
SETTLE DOWN, DAD.

URP...



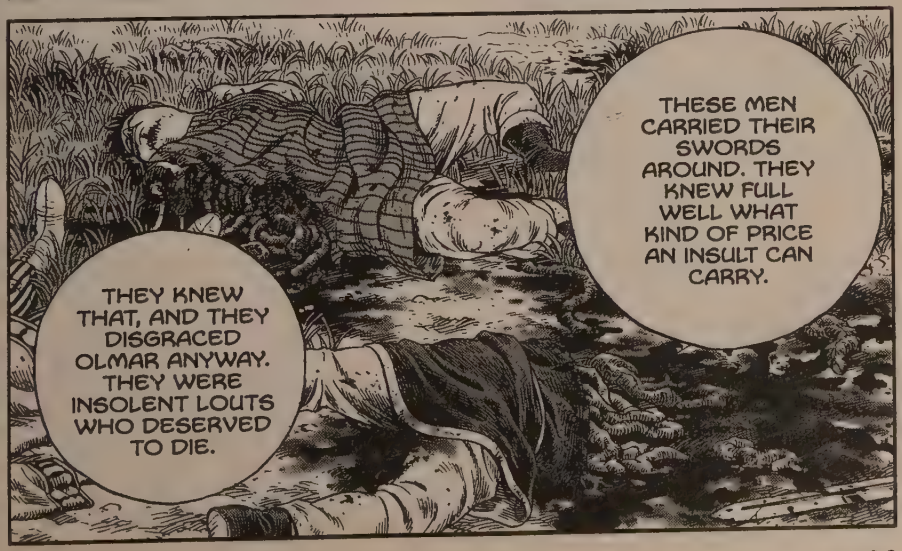
YOU...


...ASSUMING IT WAS NORMAL.
WE WEREN'T IN THE WRONG. IT WAS A COMMON DUEL.
UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES, WE WOULDN'T BE PUNISHED.

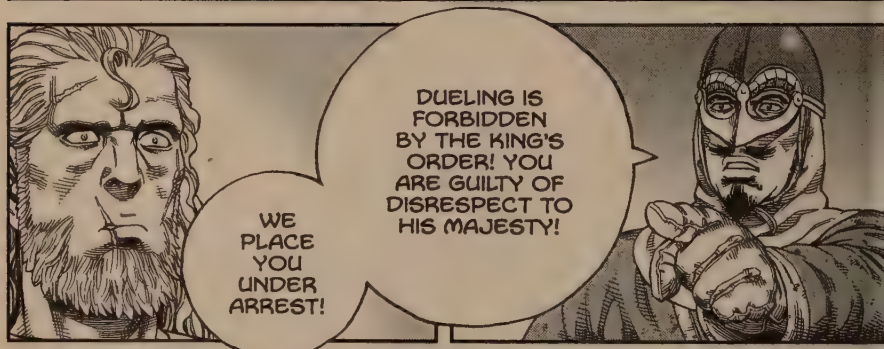

OUT TA THE WAY!!
MURMUR.
LET US THROUGH!!
IF IT WAS... NORMAL ?
...

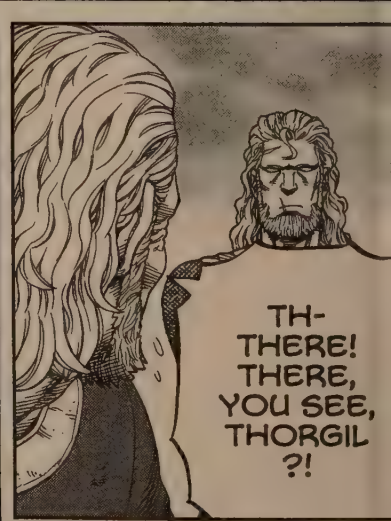
YOU'RE HIS FATHER. YOU OUGHT TO BE PROUD OF OLMAR.
OLMAR WAS DISGRACED, IT TURNED INTO A DUEL, AND HE PROTECTED HIS HONOR.
THERE WERE FIVE OF THEM. I WAS WELL-JUSTIFIED IN JOINING HIS SIDE.

A LAW NO ONE OBEYS.
YOU FOOLS!! DUELING IS PROHIBIT-ED BY LAW HERE!!


THESE MEN CARRIED THEIR SWORDS AROUND. THEY KNEW FULL WELL WHAT KIND OF PRICE AN INSULT CAN CARRY.
THEY KNEW THAT, AND THEY DISGRACED OLMAR ANYWAY. THEY WERE INSOLENT LOUTS WHO DESERVED TO DIE.

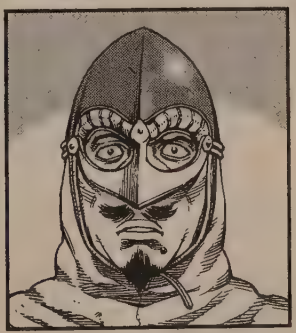
IT WAS A STANDARD DUEL. WE DID NOTHING WRONG.
THIS IS MY FATHER KETIL AND BROTHER OLMAR.
I AM THORGIL, SON OF KETIL, THEGN OF KING CANUTE.

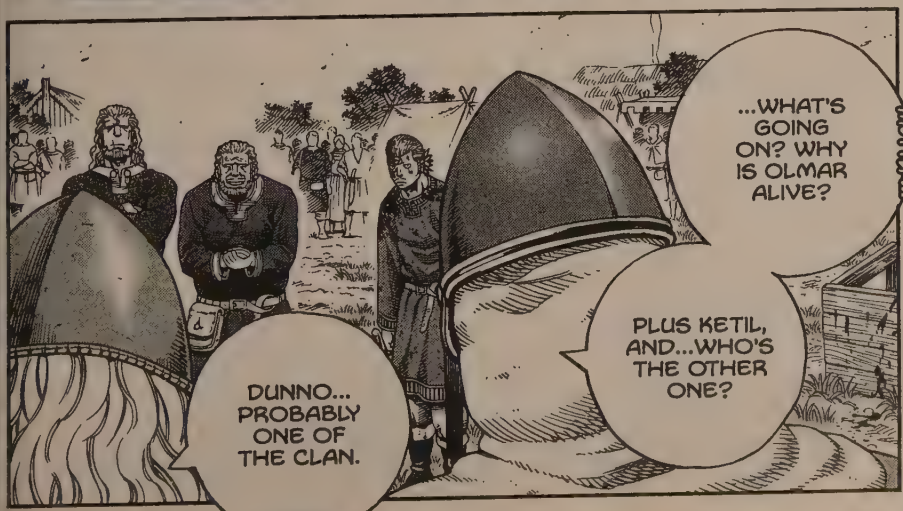

WE PLACE YOU UNDER ARREST!
DUELING IS FORBIDDEN BY THE KING'S ORDER! YOU ARE GUILTY OF DISRESPECT TO HIS MAJESTY!


TH-THERE! THERE, YOU SEE, THORGIL ?!

COME QUIETLY, AND WE MIGHT NOT...

WHO DARES DISTURB THE KING'S PEACE IN HIS STRONG-HOLD?!



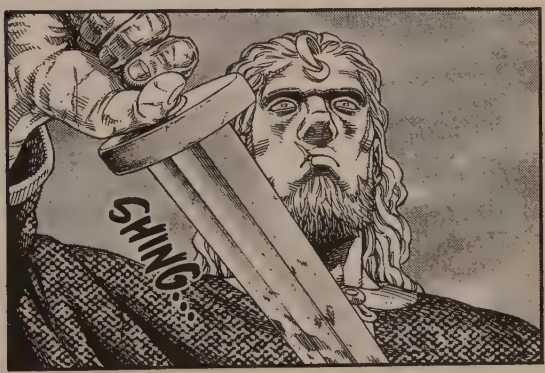


GRIT

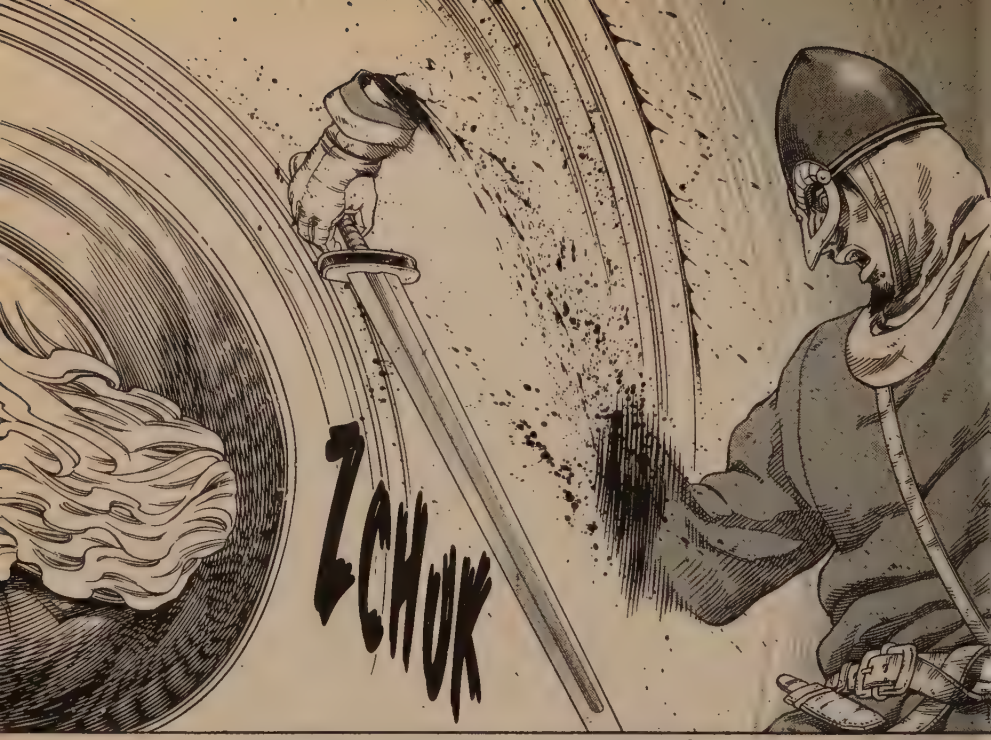
HAND OVER YOUR SWORD AND PUT YOUR ARMS BEHIND YOU.

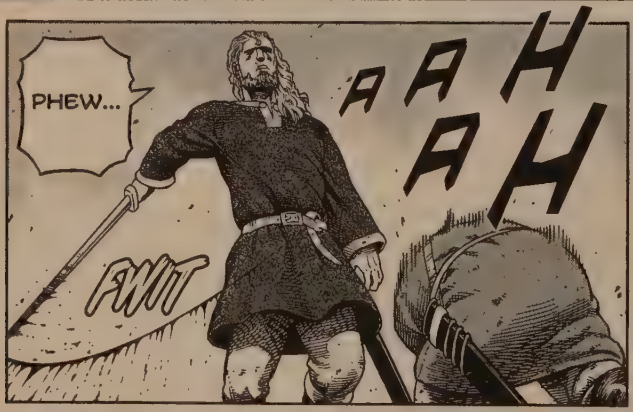
HANDS BEHIND YOUR BACK!

FFFFH

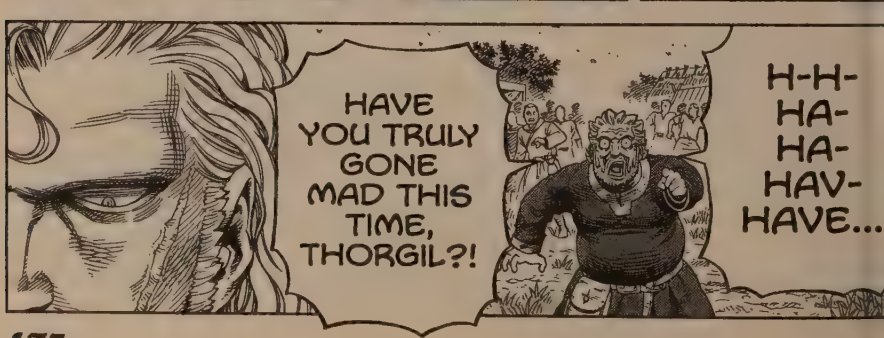

SHING

BTT


ZCHUK

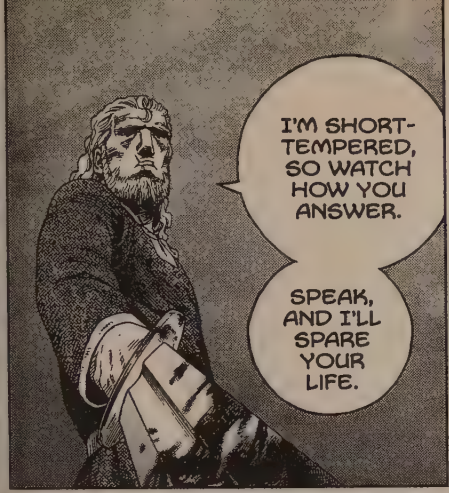

PHEW...
AAH
AAH
FWIT

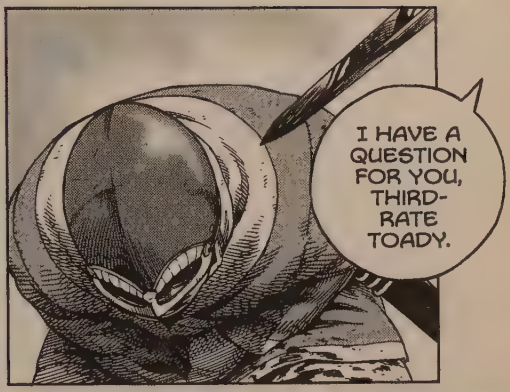
HG!

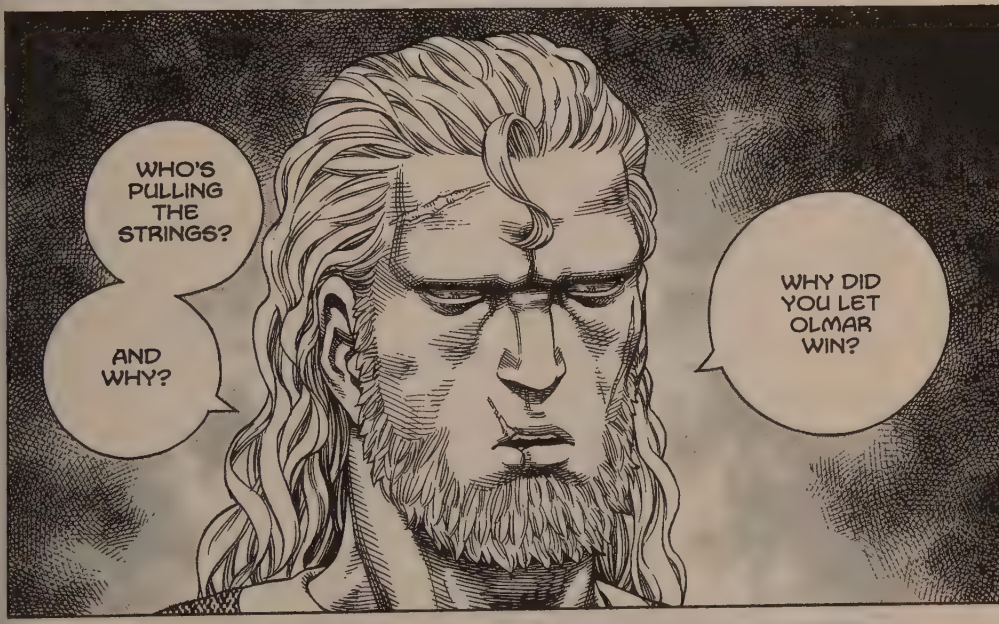

HAVE YOU TRULY GONE MAD THIS TIME, THORGIL?!
H-H-HA-HA-HAV-HAVE...

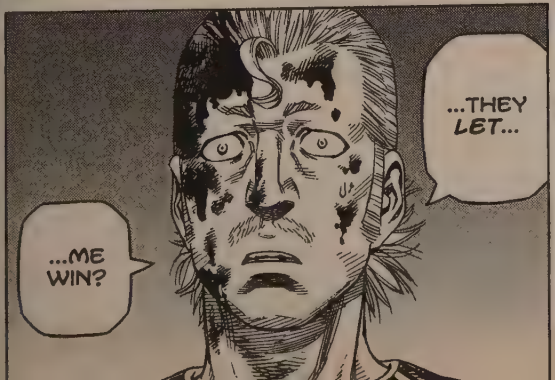
ZASH
TEK
TUT
TUT
TUT
THUD
SWIKK
KCHAK
YOU RAT!!
SHING

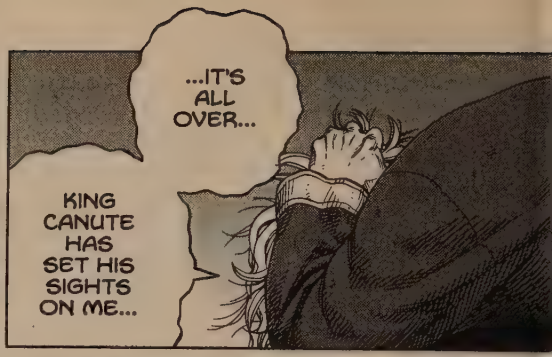
ZRP
I...I DON'T KN-
...
SPEAK.
WHY DID YOU PUT OLMAR IN THIS TRAP?
EEYAAAGH
YOU HEARD MY WARN-ING.
WE WERE MEANT TO IMPLICATE KETIL IN HIS SON'S CRIME OF DISOBE-DIENCE AND TREASON TO THE KING!
...TO... TO SEIZE KETIL! TO SEIZE AND ARREST KETIL!!
SO WE HAD OLMAR KILL HIS MAJESTY'S MESSEN-GER...!


I'M SHORT-TEMPERED, SO WATCH HOW YOU ANSWER.
SPEAK, AND I'LL SPARE YOUR LIFE.


I HAVE A QUESTION FOR YOU, THIRD-RATE TOADY.

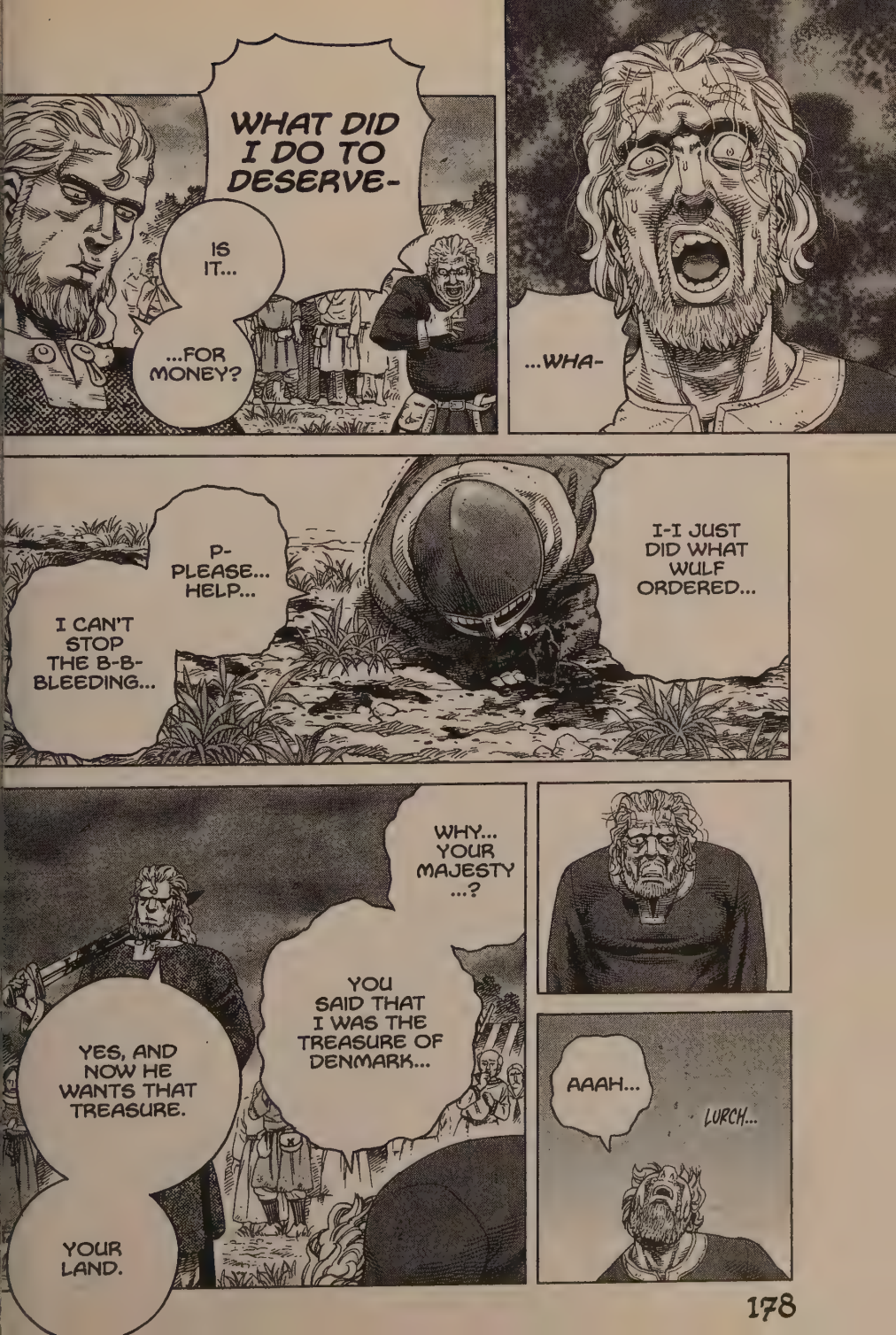

WHO'S PULLING THE STRINGS?
AND WHY?
WHY DID YOU LET OLMAR WIN?


...THEY LET...
...ME WIN?

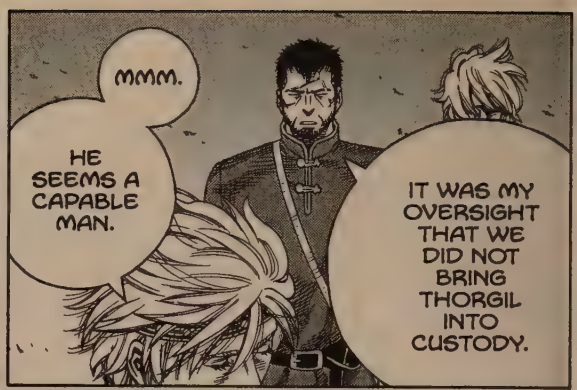


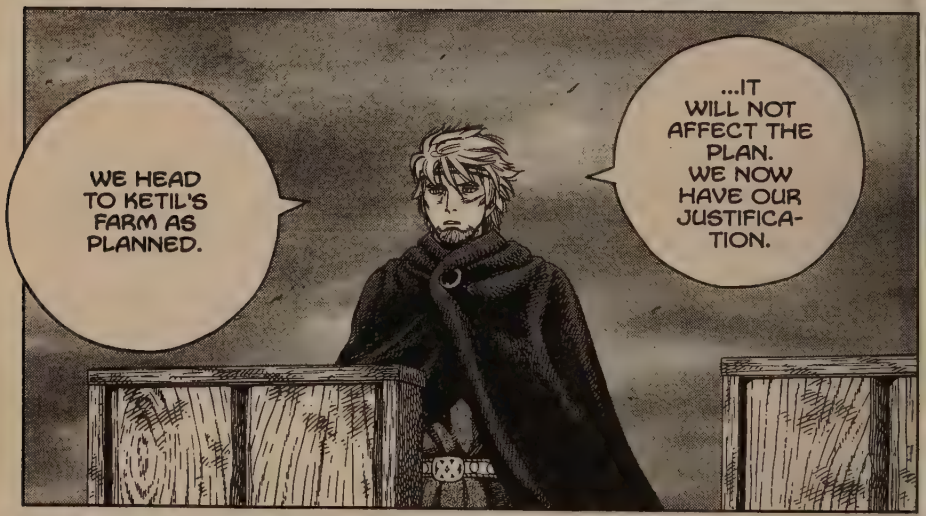
IT'S JUST THE BEGINNING.

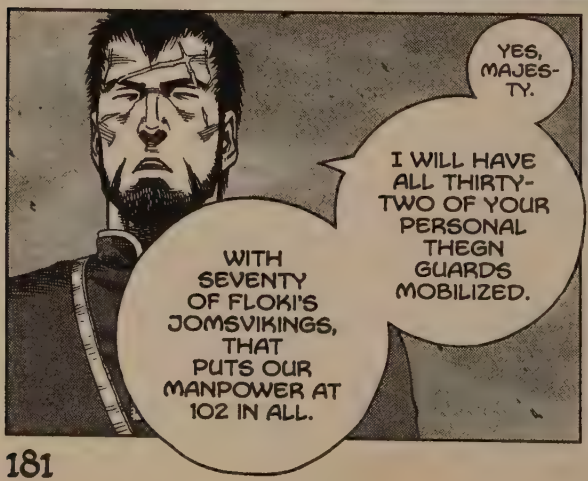
OUR FOE IS MIGHTY.

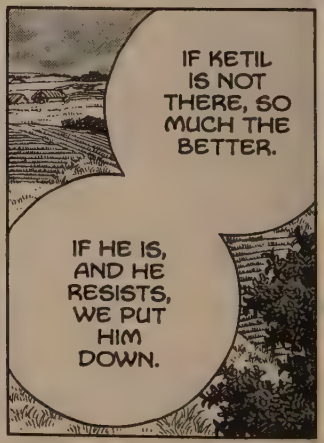

WHAT DID I DO TO DESERVE-
IS IT...
...FOR MONEY?
...WHA-
P-PLEASE... HELP...
I CAN'T STOP THE B-B-BLEEDING...
I-I JUST DID WHAT WULF ORDERED...
WHY... YOUR MAJESTY ...?
YOU SAID THAT I WAS THE TREASURE OF DENMARK...
YES, AND NOW HE WANTS THAT TREASURE.
YOUR LAND.
AAAH...
LURCH...

HE WAS A GOOD SOLDIER.
YES.


MMM.
HE SEEMS A CAPABLE MAN.
IT WAS MY OVERSIGHT THAT WE DID NOT BRING THORGIL INTO CUSTODY.


WE HEAD TO KETIL'S FARM AS PLANNED.
...IT WILL NOT AFFECT THE PLAN. WE NOW HAVE OUR JUSTIFICATION.


YES, MAJESTY.
I WILL HAVE ALL THIRTY-TWO OF YOUR PERSONAL THEGN GUARDS MOBILIZED.
WITH SEVENTY OF FLOKI'S JOMSVIKINGS, THAT PUTS OUR MANPOWER AT 102 IN ALL.


IF KETIL IS NOT THERE, SO MUCH THE BETTER.
IF HE IS, AND HE RESISTS, WE PUT HIM DOWN.

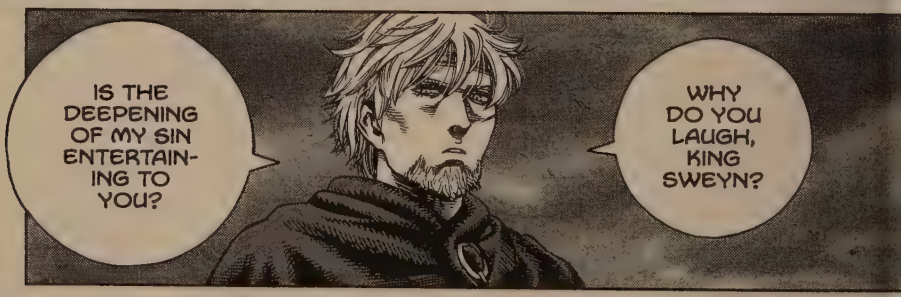
I SEE.

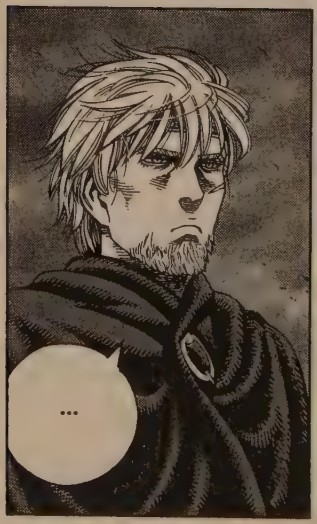
SO KETIL AND HIS FAMILY FLED.

I HAVE FAILED YOU, KING CANUTE.

WE FOUND THEIR SHIP AND LODGINGS, BUT THERE IS NO SIGHT OF THEM. WE HAVE MEN SEARCHING NOW.

HEH HEH HEH...


IS THE DEEPENING OF MY SIN ENTERTAINING TO YOU?
WHY DO YOU LAUGH, KING SWEYN?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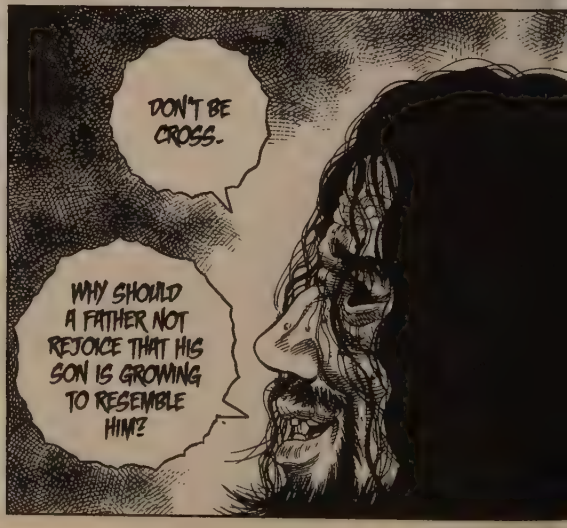
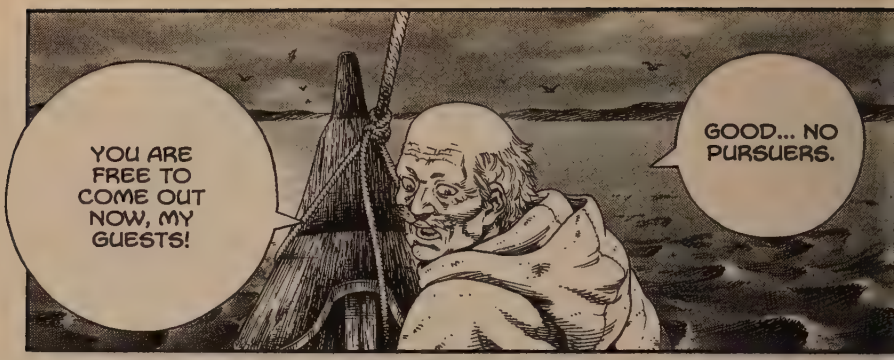
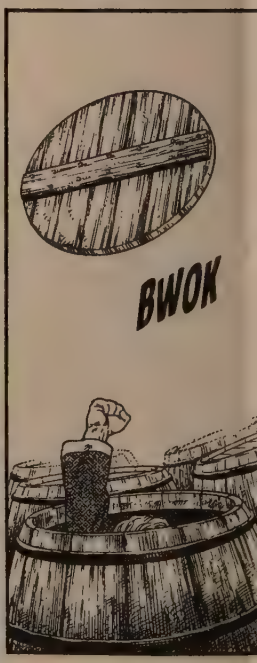

DON'T BE CROSS.
WHY SHOULD A FATHER NOT REJOICE THAT HIS SON IS GROWING TO RESEMBLE HIM?

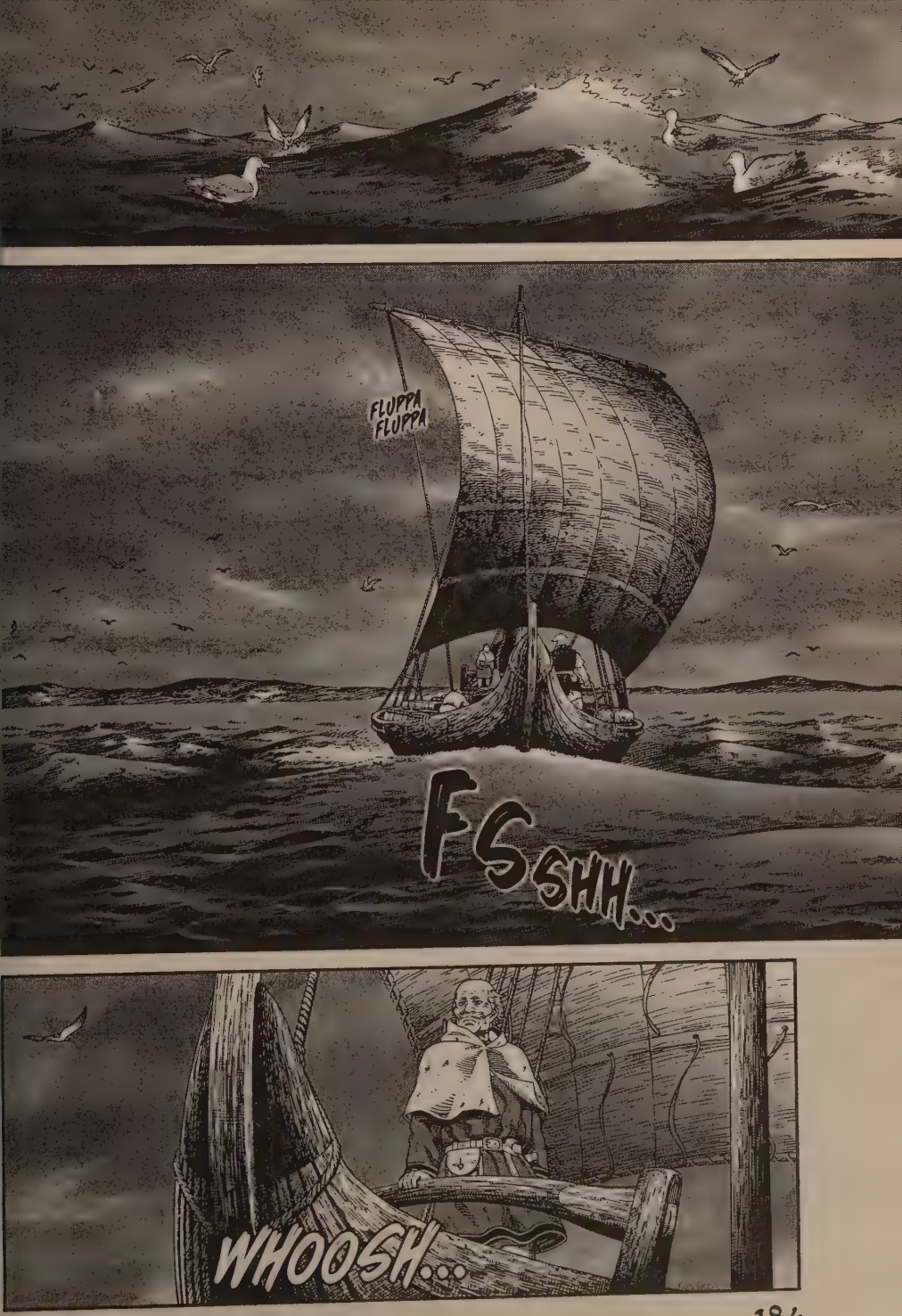
WITHIN THREE DAYS FROM JOMS-BORG.
WHEN WILL FLOKI ARRIVE?
THAT SHOULD SUFFICE.
...
YOU MAY GO.
WE LEAVE AT DAY-BREAK IN THREE DAYS.

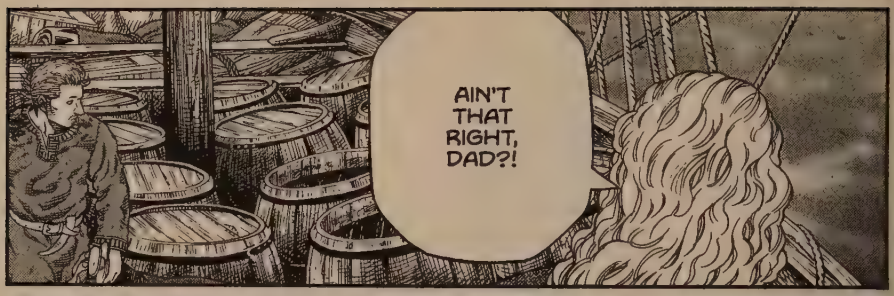

YOU ARE FREE TO COME OUT NOW, MY GUESTS!
GOOD... NO PURSUERS.

GONK-GONK
THUD THUD

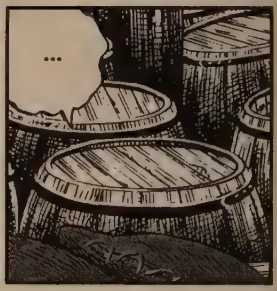
GUH! I FEEL LIKE I'VE BEEN GOOD AND PICKLED.
SHUMP


BWOK


FLUPPA FLUPPA
FSSHH...
WHOOSH...


AIN'T THAT RIGHT, DAD?!

SHUT UP!!
DAD, YOU CAN COME OUT NOW.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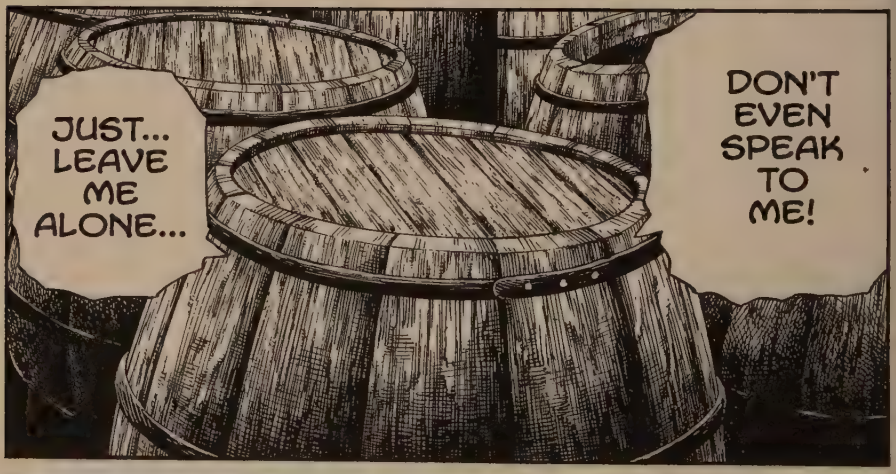
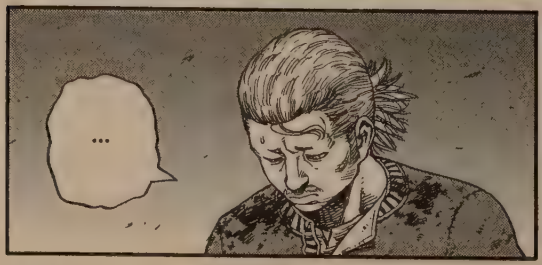

JUST... LEAVE ME ALONE...
DON'T EVEN SPEAK TO ME!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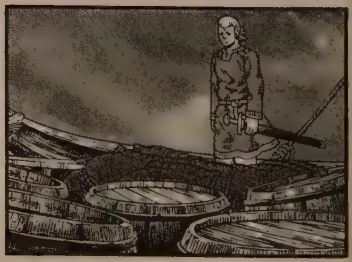
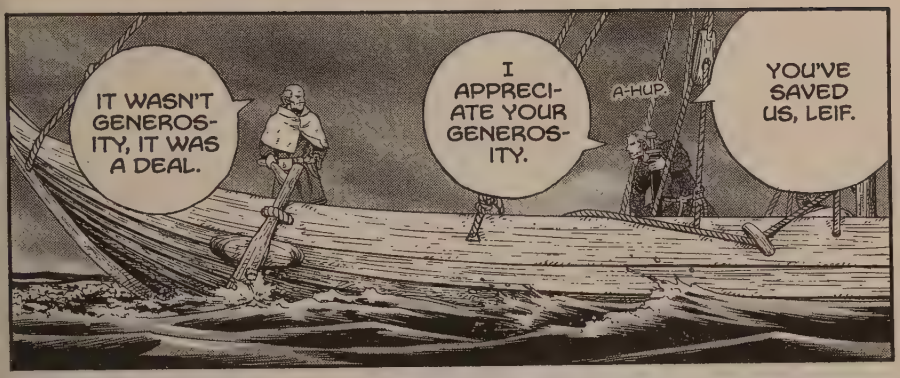
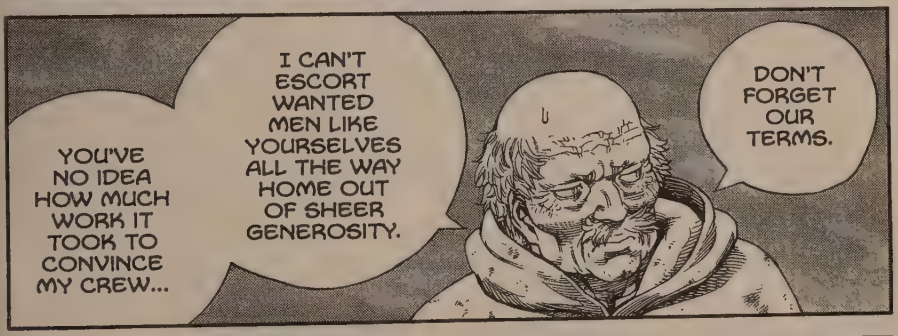
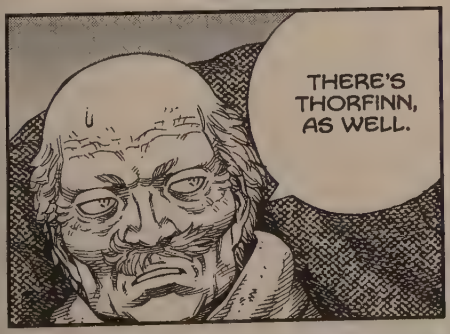
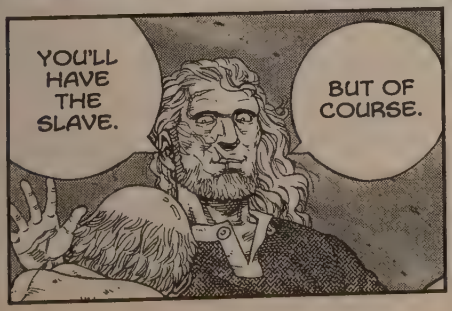
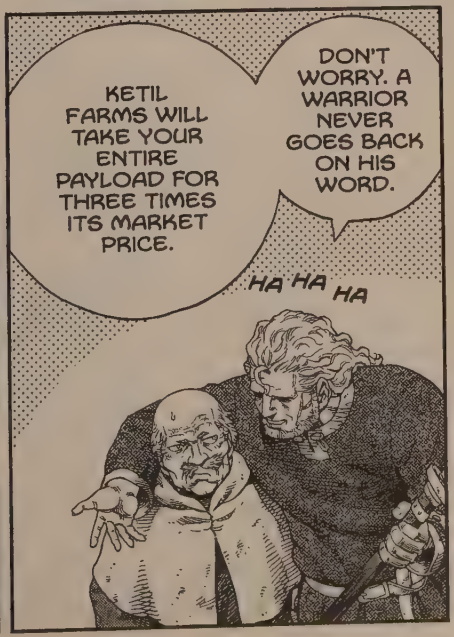



IT WASN'T GENEROSITY, IT WAS A DEAL.
I APPRECIATE YOUR GENEROSITY.
A-HUP.
YOU'VE SAVED US, LEIF.


YOU'VE NO IDEA HOW MUCH WORK IT TOOK TO CONVINCE MY CREW...
I CAN'T ESCORT WANTED MEN LIKE YOURSELVES ALL THE WAY HOME OUT OF SHEER GENEROSITY.
DON'T FORGET OUR TERMS.

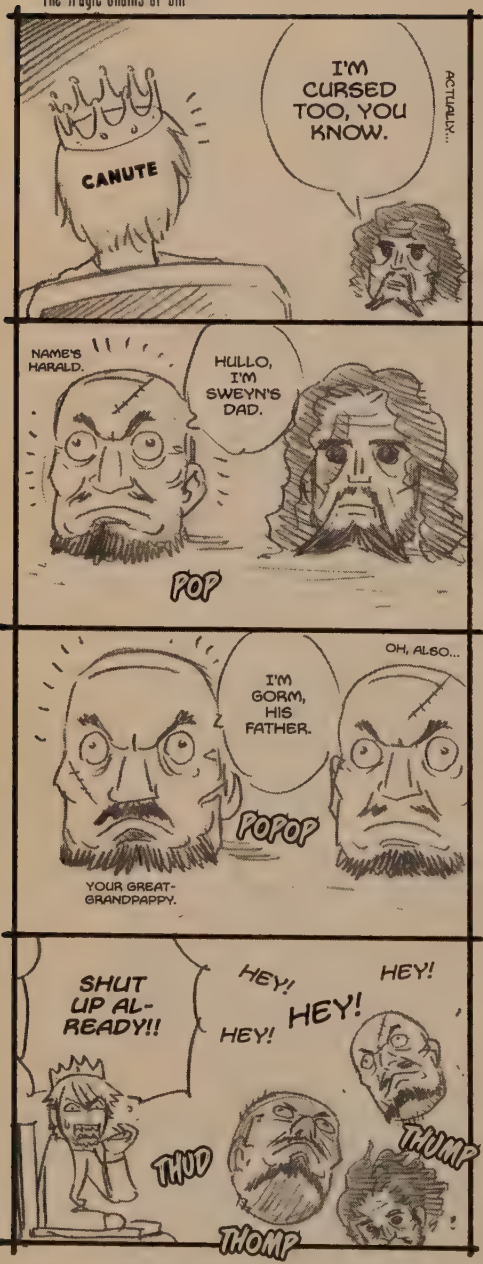

THERE'S THORFINN, AS WELL.


YOU'LL HAVE THE SLAVE.
BUT OF COURSE.


KETIL FARMS WILL TAKE YOUR ENTIRE PAYLOAD FOR THREE TIMES ITS MARKET PRICE.
DON'T WORRY. A WARRIOR NEVER GOES BACK ON HIS WORD.
HA HA HA

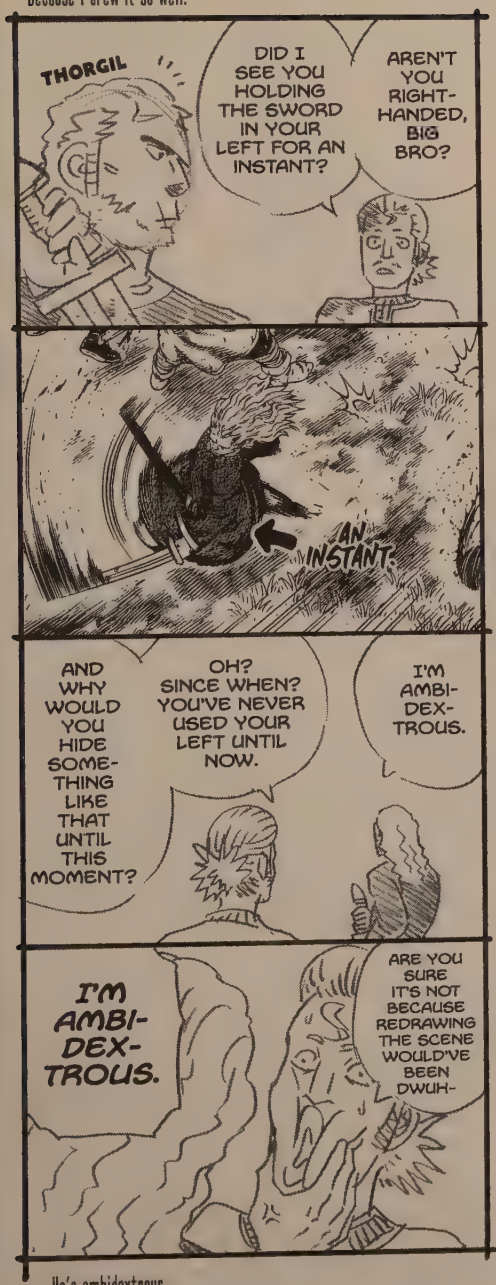
VINLAND SAGA MAP
THORFINN'S TRAVELS
ENGLAND
After the death of Sweyn, Canute's father, war returned to England, until Canute subjugated it and took the throne. Because of unrest under Danish rule, Canute must keep an occupying force there at all times.
Iceland
Reykjavik
Faroes
Sea of Norway
Shetland
Norway
Oslo
Sweden
Gulf of Bothnia
Finland
Lake Ladoga
Gulf of Finland
North Sea
Denmark
Baltic Sea
W. Dvina R.
Vistula R.
Oder R.
Elbe R.
Weser R.
Rhine R.
England
Ireland
Danelaw
Wales
London
River Thames
Atlantic Ocean
Normandy
Paris
Seine R.
Francia
Loire R.
JELLING
The capital of Denmark. Canute poisoned his brother Harald and took the throne of Denmark here.
CANUTE
WULF
KETIL'S FARM
A rich, vast farm where Thorfinn works as a slave. Ketil often voyages to Jelling to offer generous tributes to the king for protection.
THORFINN
KETIL
SNAKE
SVERKEL
ARNHEID
OLMAR

IT IS NECESSARY TO BRING ABOUT MY PARADISE...
LAUGH AT ME, IF YOU MUST.
CURSE ME, IF YOU MUST.
ALL FOR THE SAKE...
...OF THE LOVE WE HAVE LOST.


CANUTE
I'M CURSED TOO, YOU KNOW.
ACTUALLY...
NAME'S HARALD.
HULLO, I'M SWEYN'S DAD.
POP
OH, ALSO...
I'M GORM, HIS FATHER.
POPOP
YOUR GREAT-GRANDPAPPY.
SHUT UP AL-READY!!
HEY!
HEY!
HEY!
HEY!
THUD
THUMP
THOMP

...
SORRY, I'LL DO BETTER NEXT VOLUME.
HELLO... I'M THE MYSTER-IOUS RUN-AWAY SLAVE.
IF YOU REMEMBERED MY SIDE PLOT, THANKS.
I'LL DO BETTER NEXT VOLUME, I SWEAR.
NO, I'M FINE, I'LL JUST STAY THIS INTENSE THE WHOLE TIME.

Because I drew it so well.



...He's ambidextrous.

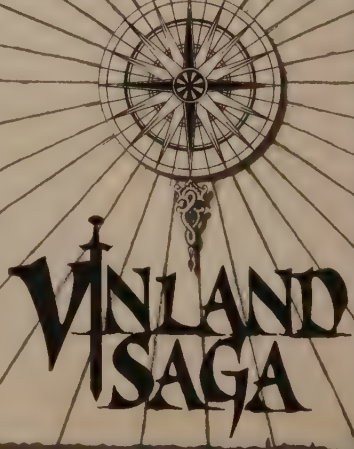
VINLAND SAGA FLIGHTS OF FANCY

I SWEAR, FOUR IS TOO MUCH!!

MAKOTO YUKIMURA

It even surprises the author how many fathers and sons appear in this manga. Some are close, and others are not. My father is a strong and healthy judo athlete, a serious man who wore a crisp suit to work every morning and never caused trouble for our family with drinking or gambling. He's the perfect example of a good father, if I'm allowed to say so myself. I wanted to be independent from him as soon as possible. I felt ashamed to be under his care, didn't like having to follow his opinions, and swore that I wouldn't follow his influence. So I practiced kendo instead of judo. Of course, the fact that I would choose another combat style for my activity already says a lot, doesn't it? We didn't butt heads about things; if anything, we were close. But I wanted to be as far from him as I could be. That's what me and my father are like. I kind of hope that my sons are the same way with me. Grow up on your own, boys. Hmm...wait, doesn't that mean I have to be a perfect example of a good father, too? I don't know if I can live up to that...

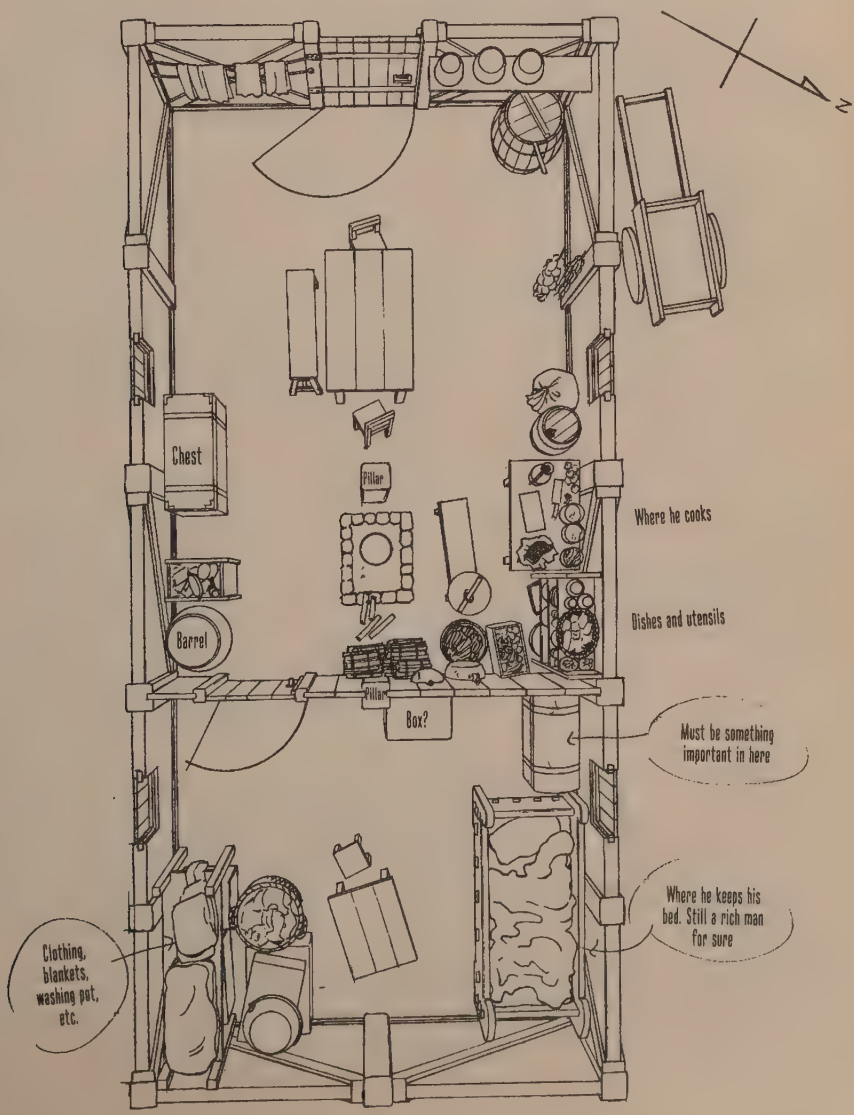
MAKOTO YUKIMURA

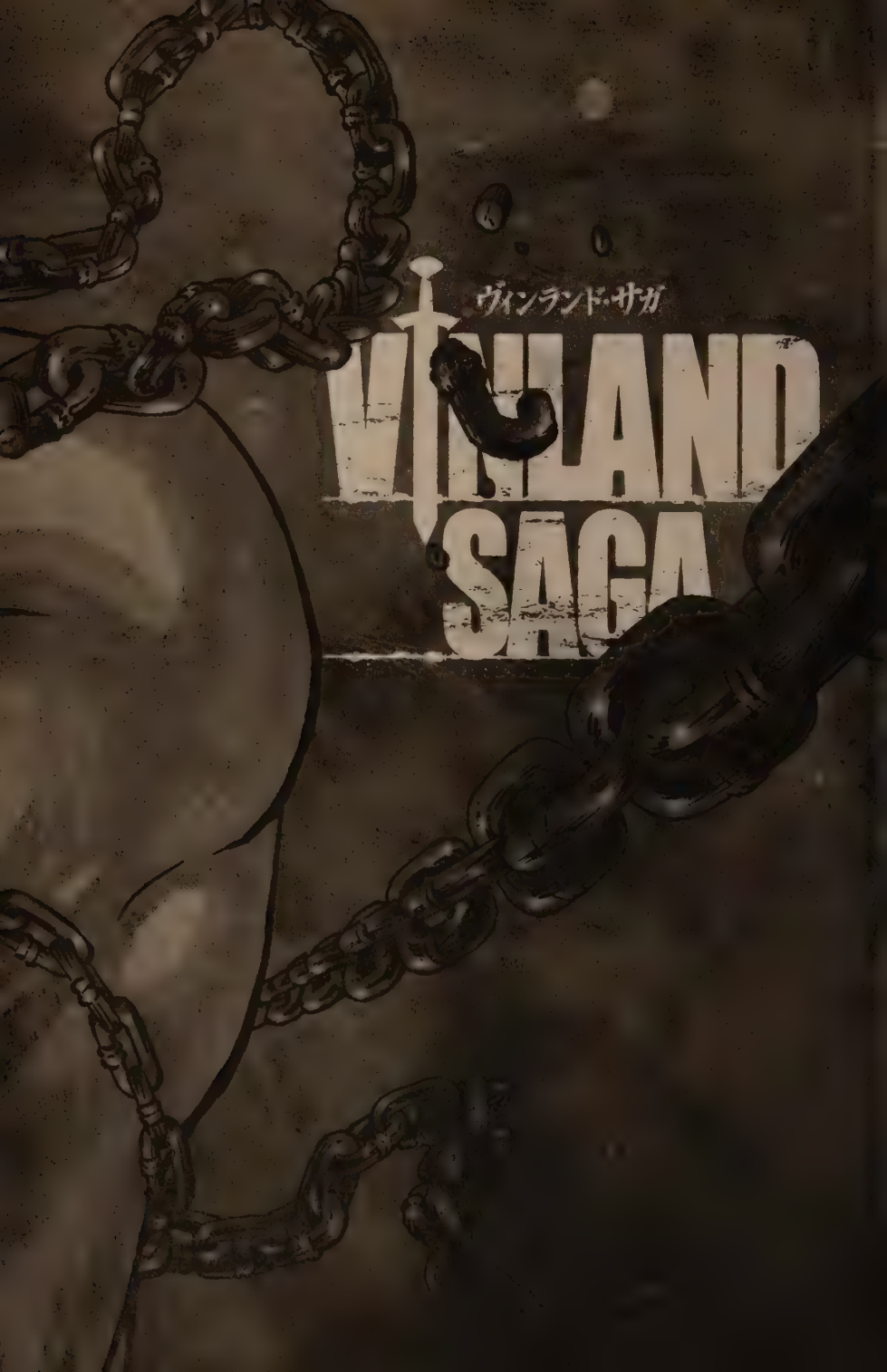


SUPPLEMENTAL DESIGNS

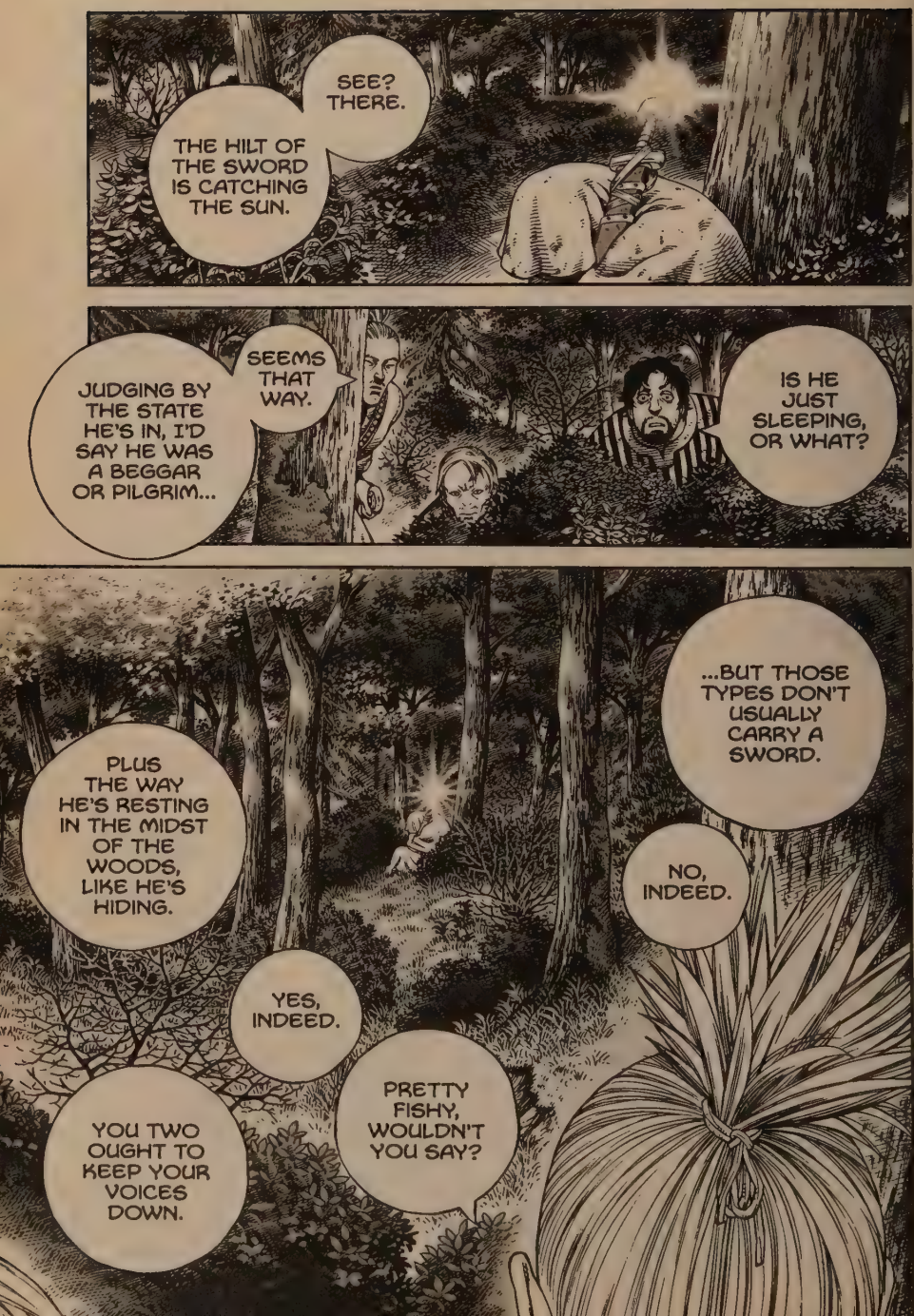
OLD MASTER'S HOUSE (MAIN WING)

SEEMS LIKE SOMETHING'S MISSING...
DON'T KNOW WHAT, THOUGH...



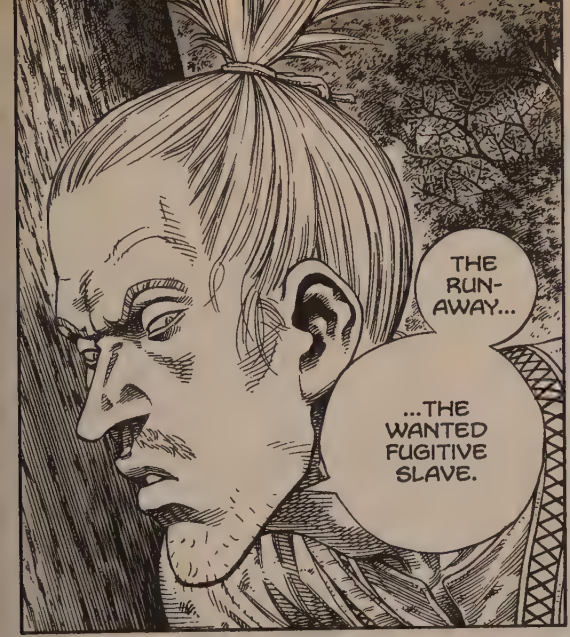

ヴィンランド・サガ
VINLAND
SAGA

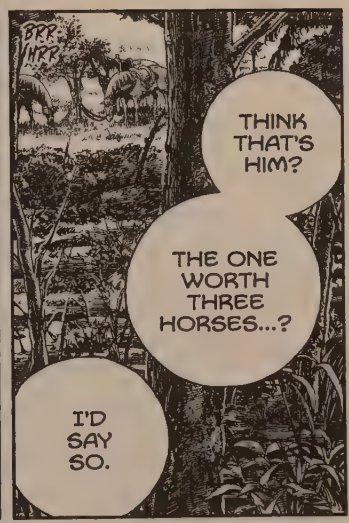
CHAPTER 79: PORTENTS OF STORM CLOUDS

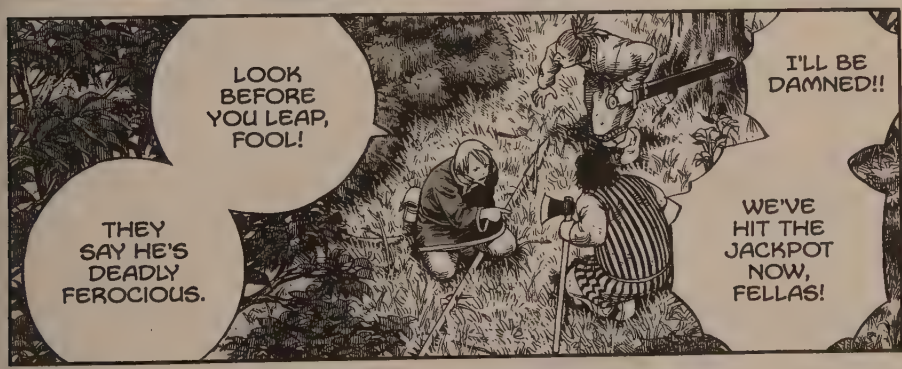

SEE? THERE.
THE HILT OF THE SWORD IS CATCHING THE SUN.
JUDGING BY THE STATE HE'S IN, I'D SAY HE WAS A BEGGAR OR PILGRIM...
SEEMS THAT WAY.
IS HE JUST SLEEPING, OR WHAT?
PLUS THE WAY HE'S RESTING IN THE MIDST OF THE WOODS, LIKE HE'S HIDING.
...BUT THOSE TYPES DON'T USUALLY CARRY A SWORD.
NO, INDEED.
YES, INDEED.
YOU TWO OUGHT TO KEEP YOUR VOICES DOWN.
PRETTY FISHY, WOULDN'T YOU SAY?

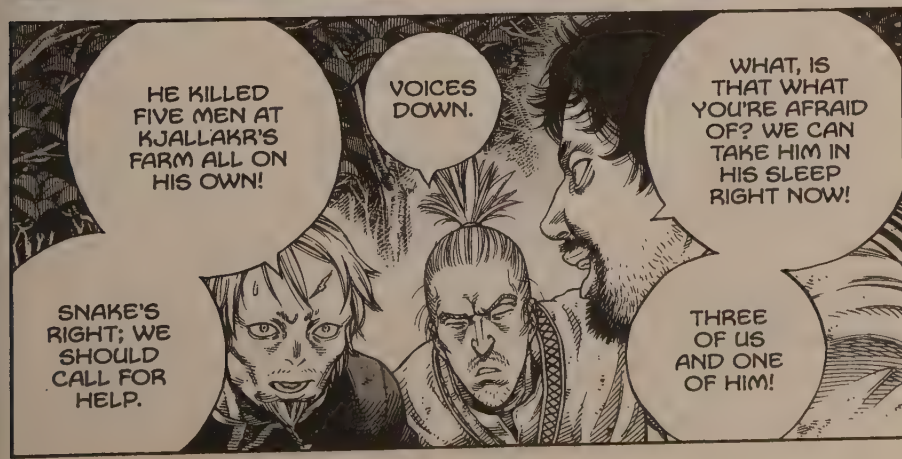
GLINT
SHFF
KSHF

WHY DO YOU ONLY THINK ABOUT THINGS AS IF THEY REVOLVE AROUND YOU, BADGER?!
I SAID KEEP YOUR VOICES DOWN!
DON'T BE A PUSSY, LIZARD!
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT HE CAN DO WITH THE SWORD! WHERE'S THAT CONFIDENCE COMING FROM?!
IF WE CALL FOR HELP, THAT'S EVEN LESS OF A SHARE FOR US!
YOU WANT A FUCKING HORSE SO BAD, YOU CAN TAKE A LEG OR TWO FOR YOUR SHARE AND EAT THEM, YOU FAT SACK OF SHIT!!
USE YOUR IN! SIDE! VO!! CES!
THE BOUNTY ON HIM IS THREE HORSES!
GO AHEAD AND FIGHT HIM YOURSELF AND DIE FOR ALL I CARE!!
I'M JUST SAYING, WITH THE THREE OF US IT'S ONE HORSE FOR EVERY MAN, NICE AND SIMPLE!!
NOT IF I DON'T RUN YOU THROUGH FIRST, PORKY!!
I SAID SHUT THE FUCK UP!!
FINE, BUT NOT UNTIL I'VE GUTTED YOU, YOU MISERABLE REPTILE!!


THE RUN-AWAY...
...THE WANTED FUGITIVE SLAVE.


BRR-HRR
THINK THAT'S HIM?
THE ONE WORTH THREE HORSES...?
I'D SAY SO.

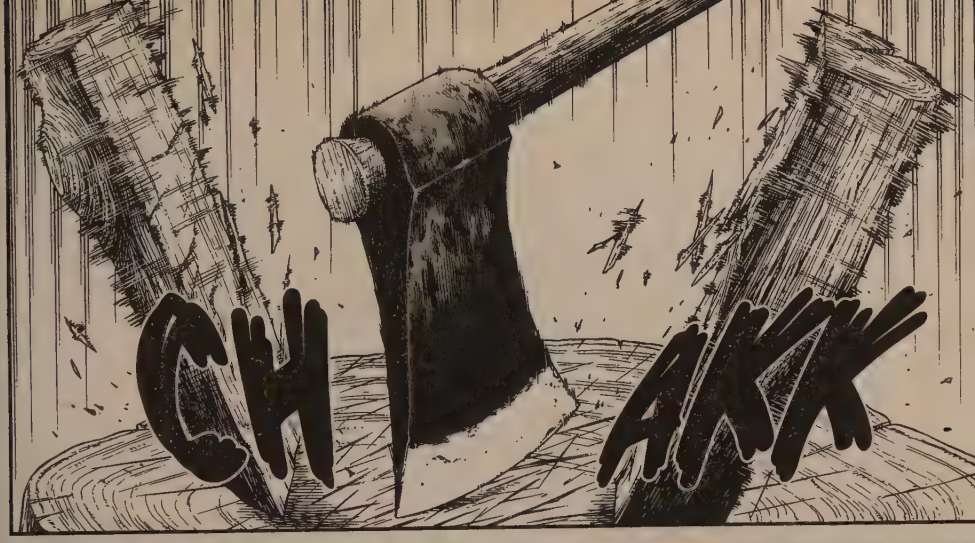

LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP, FOOL!
THEY SAY HE'S DEADLY FEROCIOUS.
I'LL BE DAMNED!!
WE'VE HIT THE JACKPOT NOW, FELLAS!


HE KILLED FIVE MEN AT KJALLAKR'S FARM ALL ON HIS OWN!
VOICES DOWN.
WHAT, IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE AFRAID OF? WE CAN TAKE HIM IN HIS SLEEP RIGHT NOW!
SNAKE'S RIGHT; WE SHOULD CALL FOR HELP.
THREE OF US AND ONE OF HIM!

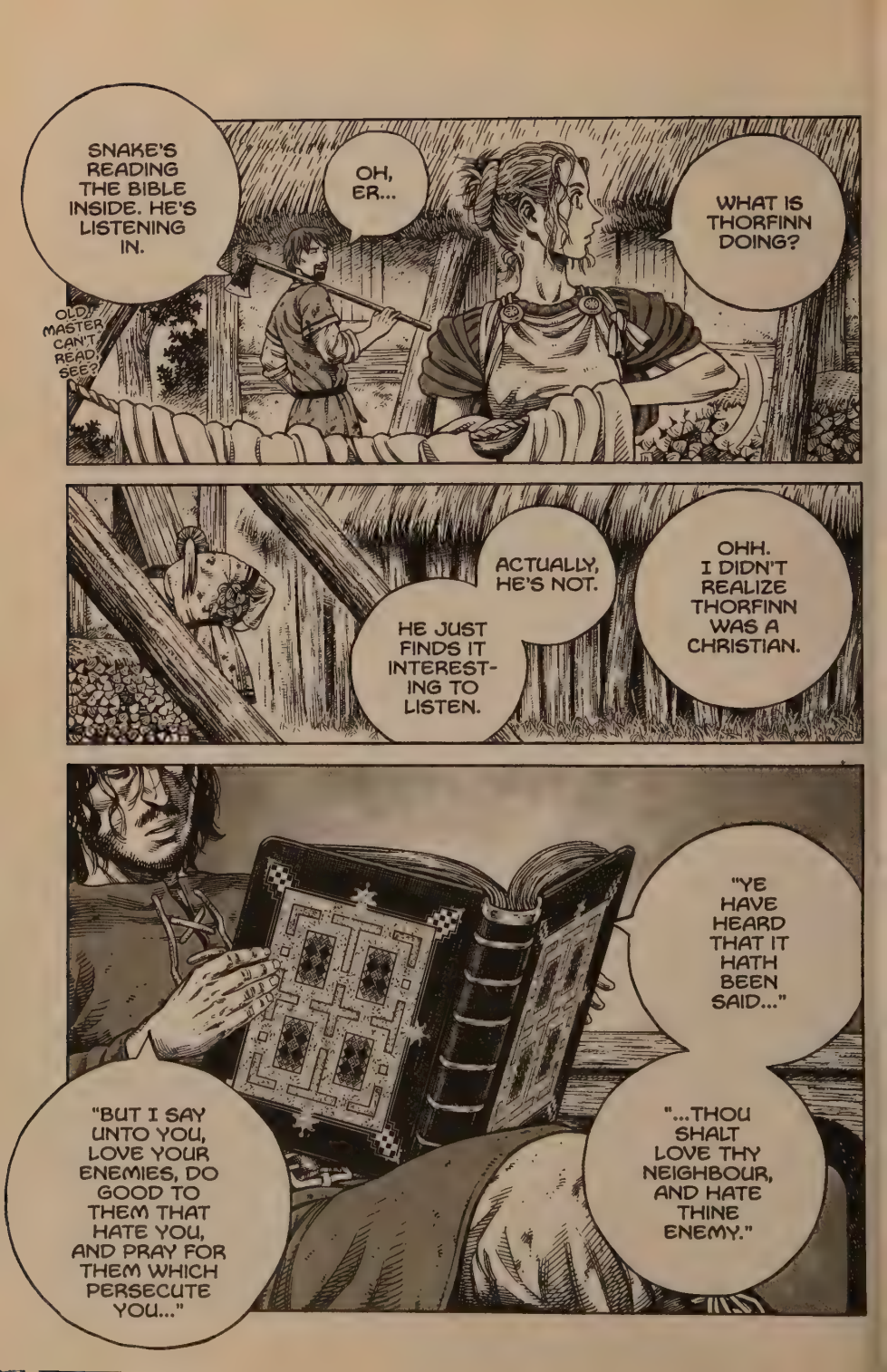
THUK

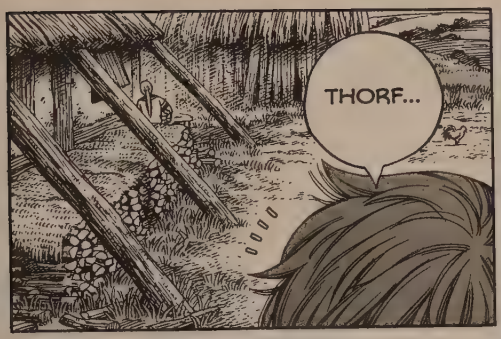
CRAK...
OOPS.

PHEW.
IT'S HOT!
WHAP
SLOSH SLOSH
THERE.
KCHAK


CH
AKK

SVERKEL'S HOME,
KETIL'S FARM
SOUTHERN JUTLAND,
DENMARK
OCTOBER 1018

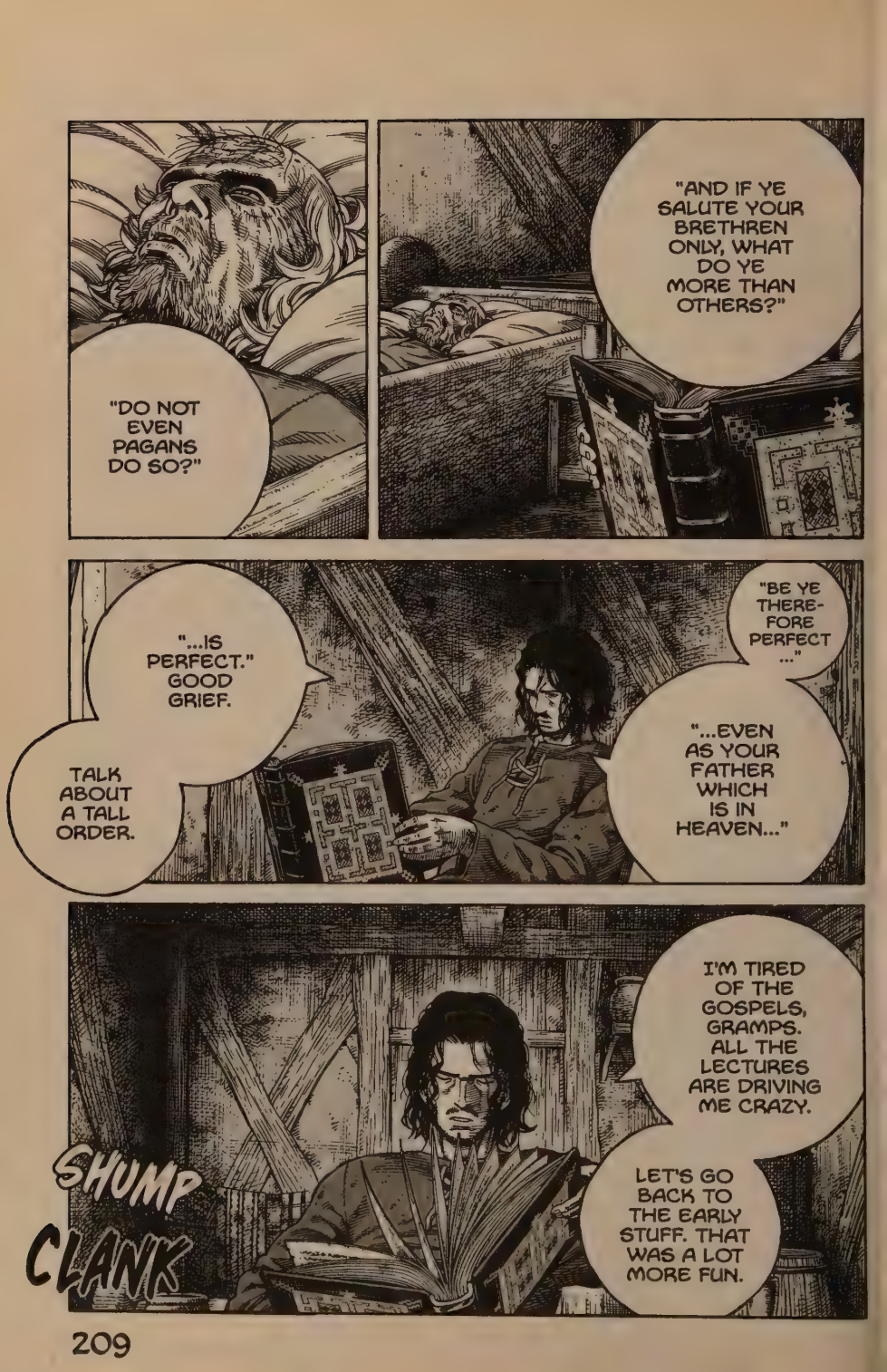

SNAKE'S READING THE BIBLE INSIDE. HE'S LISTENING IN.
OLD MASTER CAN'T READ, SEE?
OH, ER...
WHAT IS THORFINN DOING?
ACTUALLY, HE'S NOT.
HE JUST FINDS IT INTEREST-ING TO LISTEN.
OHH. I DIDN'T REALIZE THORFINN WAS A CHRISTIAN.
"YE HAVE HEARD THAT IT HATH BEEN SAID..."
"BUT I SAY UNTO YOU, LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, DO GOOD TO THEM THAT HATE YOU, AND PRAY FOR THEM WHICH PERSECUTE YOU..."
"...THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR, AND HATE THINE ENEMY."

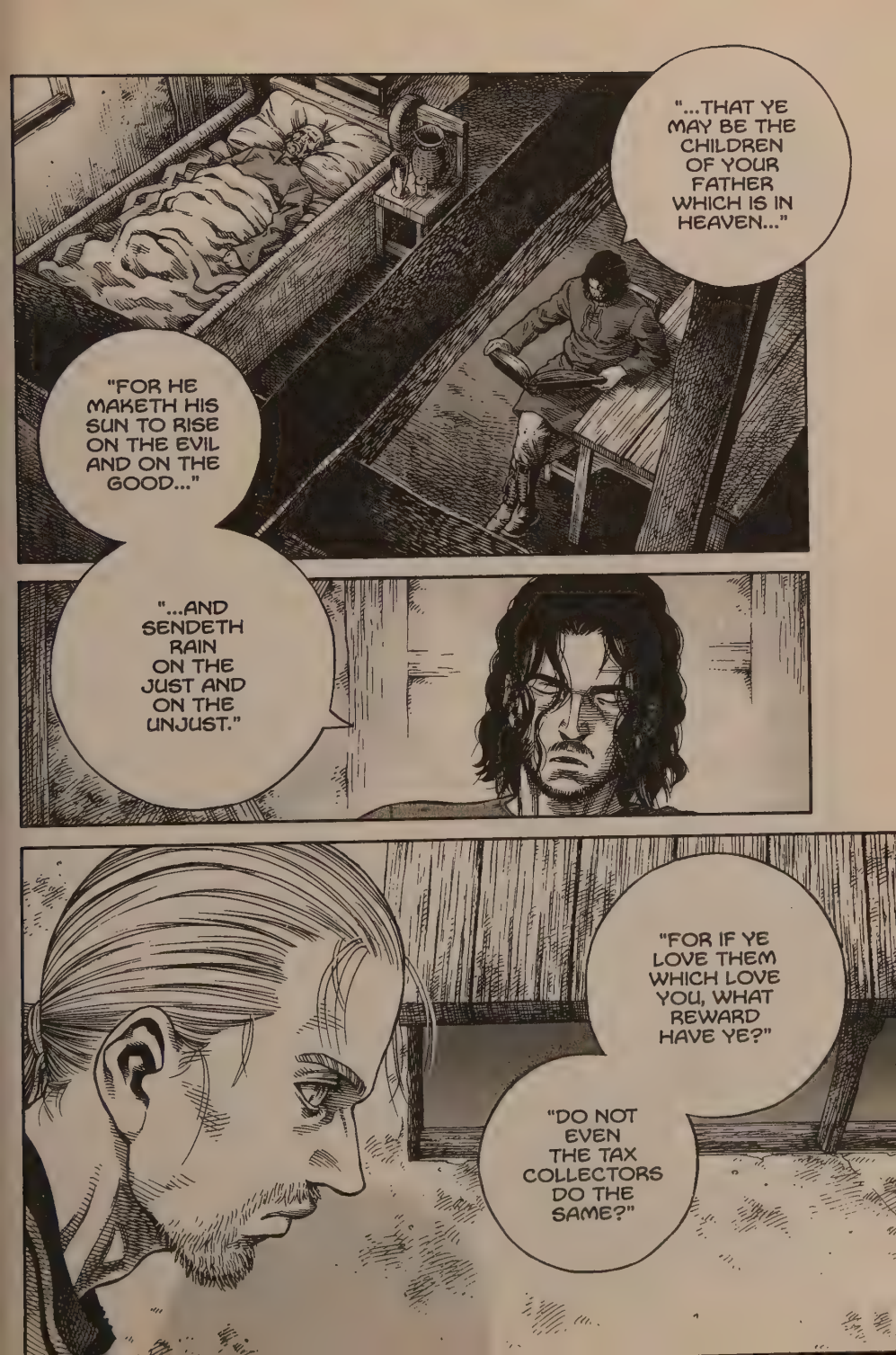

THORF...

COME AND HAUL THEM ALREADY!
THORFINN, I'VE GOT A BIG PILE OF SPLIT LOGS WAITING OVER HERE!

!

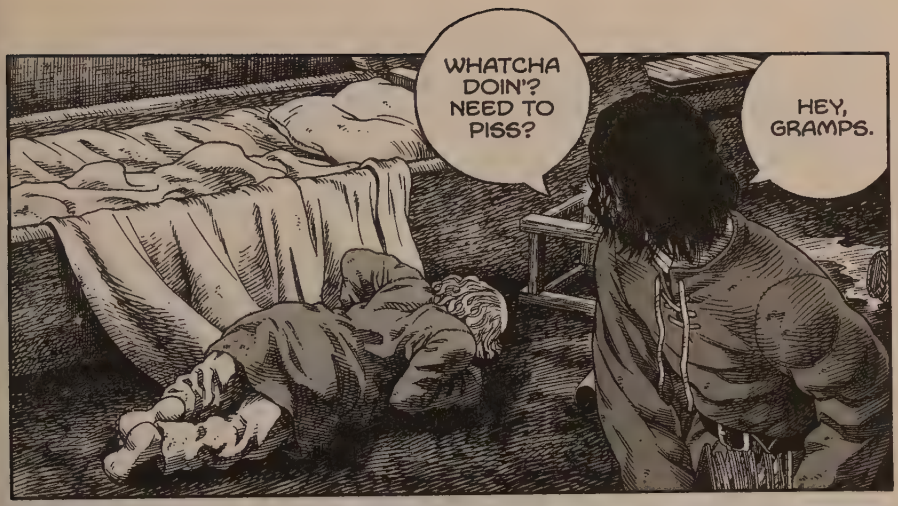
SORRY, JUST A MOMENT...


"DO NOT EVEN PAGANS DO SO?"
"AND IF YE SALUTE YOUR BRETHREN ONLY, WHAT DO YE MORE THAN OTHERS?"
"BE YE THERE-FORE PERFECT ..."
"...EVEN AS YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN..."
"...IS PERFECT." GOOD GRIEF.
TALK ABOUT A TALL ORDER.
I'M TIRED OF THE GOSPELS, GRAMPS. ALL THE LECTURES ARE DRIVING ME CRAZY.
LET'S GO BACK TO THE EARLY STUFF. THAT WAS A LOT MORE FUN.
SHUMP
CLANK


"...THAT YE MAY BE THE CHILDREN OF YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN..."
"FOR HE MAKETH HIS SUN TO RISE ON THE EVIL AND ON THE GOOD..."
"...AND SENDETH RAIN ON THE JUST AND ON THE UNJUST."
"FOR IF YE LOVE THEM WHICH LOVE YOU, WHAT REWARD HAVE YE?"
"DO NOT EVEN THE TAX COLLECTORS DO THE SAME?"

W-WE'LL HELP TOO, ARNHEID.
OH, OF COURSE!
OLD MAN PISSED HIMSELF.
COME HELP.

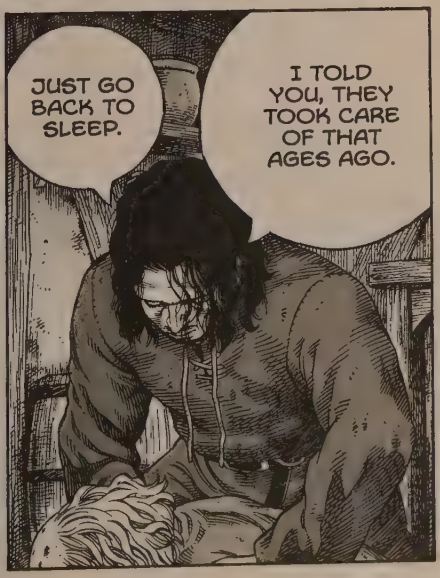
THE OLD MAN'S LOSING HIS WITS.
HE WON'T LAST MUCH LONGER.


WHATCHA DOIN'? NEED TO PISS?
HEY, GRAMPS.

WHILE THERE'S STILL LIGHT.
DRAG
DRAG
THE WHEAT...
...NEEDS REAPING.

MM?

ARNHEID, COME HERE.


JUST GO BACK TO SLEEP.
I TOLD YOU, THEY TOOK CARE OF THAT AGES AGO.

I'M JUST THINKING OF SELLING OFF HIS FANCY BOOK WHEN HE KICKS THE BUCKET, THAT'S ALL.

HUH? *RELATIONSHIP?*

WE'VE GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH EACH OTHER.

SUN'S DROPPING.

NOW GET BACK TO YOUR WORK.

SHOO SHOO

...

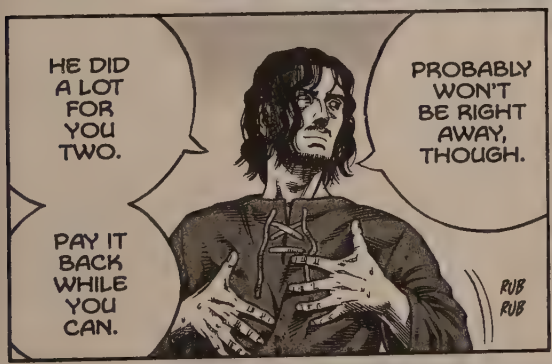
PHEW.

SLOSH

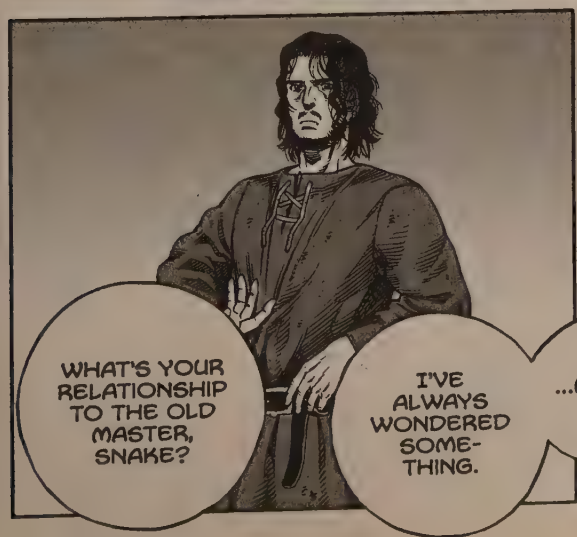
SLOSH

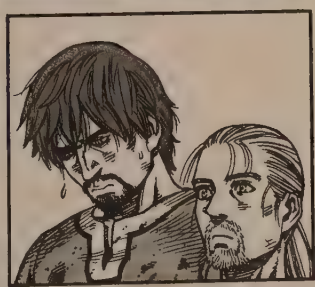
SPLASH

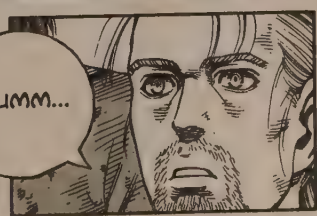
HE'S OLD ENOUGH TO HAVE GREAT-GRAND-KIDS.
WHEN THEIR LEGS GO WEAK, THE ELDERLY GROW INFIRM.
PLIT PLIT
WHAT?! BUT...
HE WAS IN GREAT HEALTH JUST WEEKS AGO...

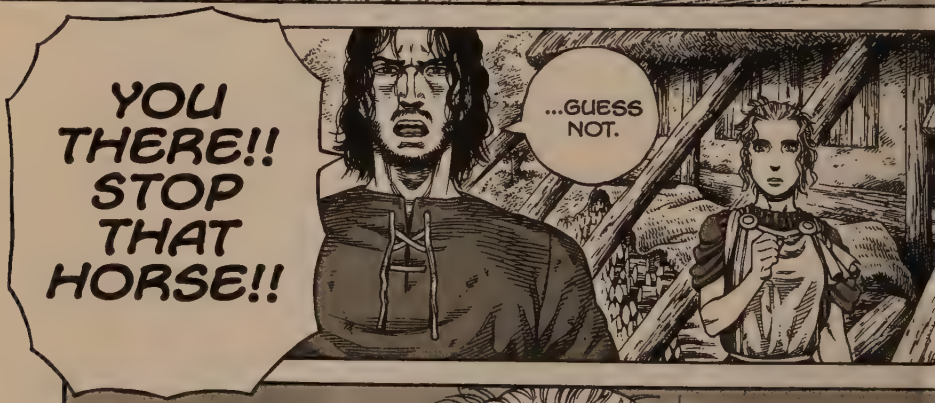

HE DID A LOT FOR YOU TWO.
PAY IT BACK WHILE YOU CAN.
PROBABLY WON'T BE RIGHT AWAY, THOUGH.
RUB RUB

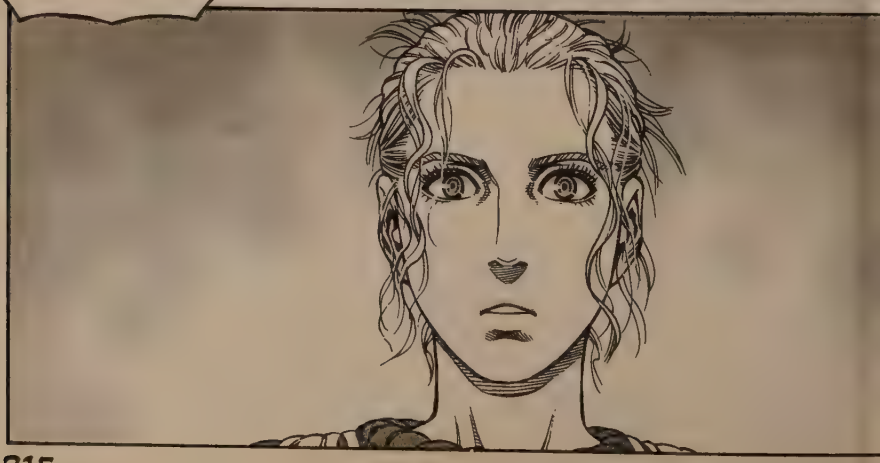
...


WHAT'S YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE OLD MASTER, SNAKE?
I'VE ALWAYS WONDERED SOME-THING.



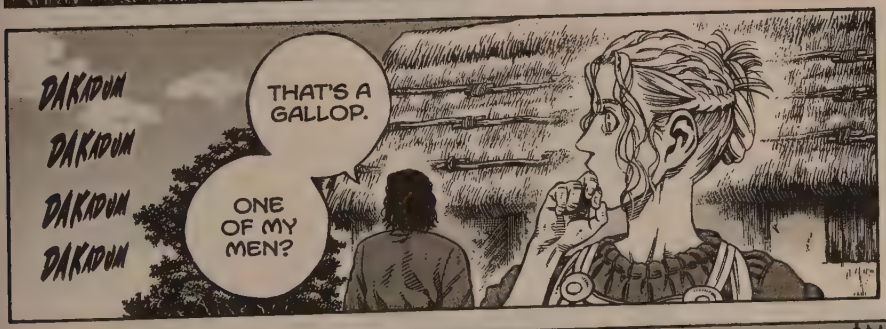

...UMM...


YOU THERE!! STOP THAT HORSE!!
...GUESS NOT.



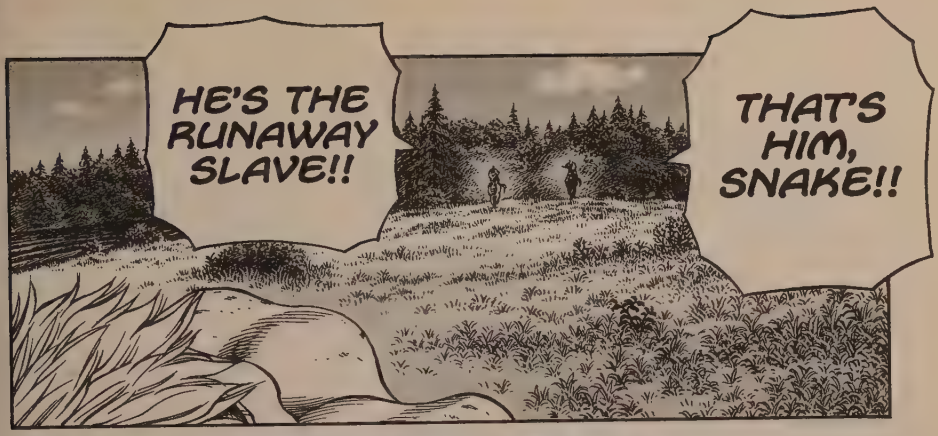
OUCH.

DAKADUN


DAKADUM
DAKADUM
DAKADUM
DAKADUM
THAT'S A GALLOP.
ONE OF MY MEN?

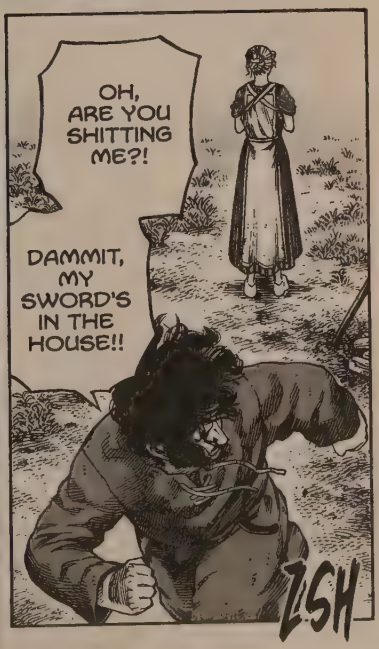
DAKADUM
DAKADUM

DAKADUN
GAR-
DAR!!!

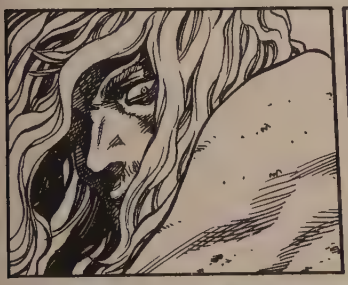

HE'S THE RUNAWAY SLAVE!!
THAT'S HIM, SNAKE!!

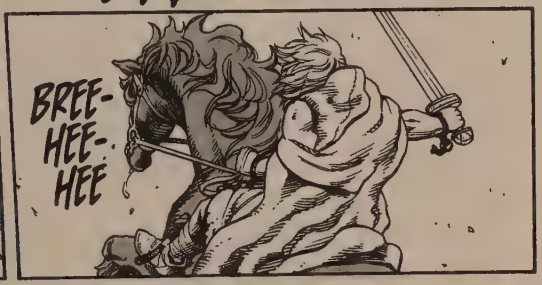
HE ALREADY KILLED LIZARD!! YOU'VE GOTTA STOP HIM!!

...IT CAN'T BE...


OH, ARE YOU SHITTING ME?!
DAMMIT, MY SWORD'S IN THE HOUSE!!
ZSH

CHAPTER 80: GARDAR'S ASSAULT





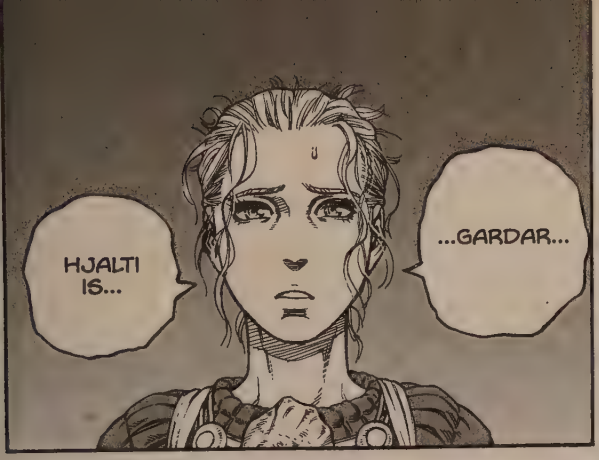
ARN-HEID!!

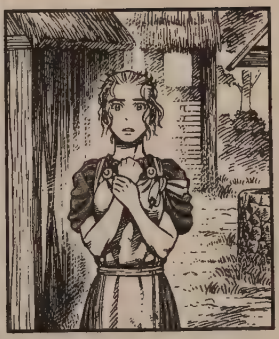
I'VE FOUND YOU AT LAST, MY WIFE!!

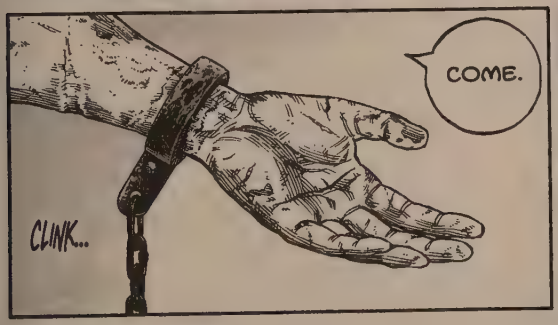
UNBELIEVABLE. ALL THIS TIME, WE WERE ONLY A FEW DAYS' WALK APART.
THIS MUST BE KETIL'S FARM, THEN.
...HUS-BAND?
IS THAT... ARN-HEID'S...
AND HOW IS HJALTI?
HE MUST BE HUGE BY NOW.

...YOU'VE LOST A LITTLE WEIGHT.
STILL, YOU'RE EVEN MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN BEFORE.

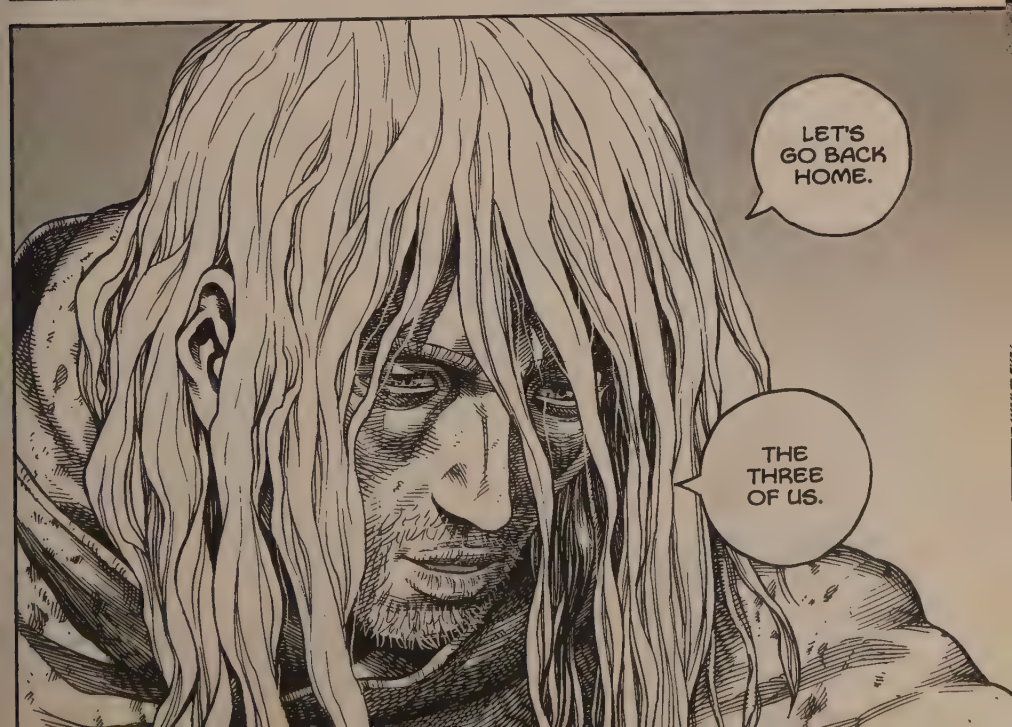
...
HOME...?
DO IT, AND I'LL CUT YOU APART!!
DON'T TAKE HIS HAND, ARN-HEID!!


HJALTI IS...
...GARDAR...

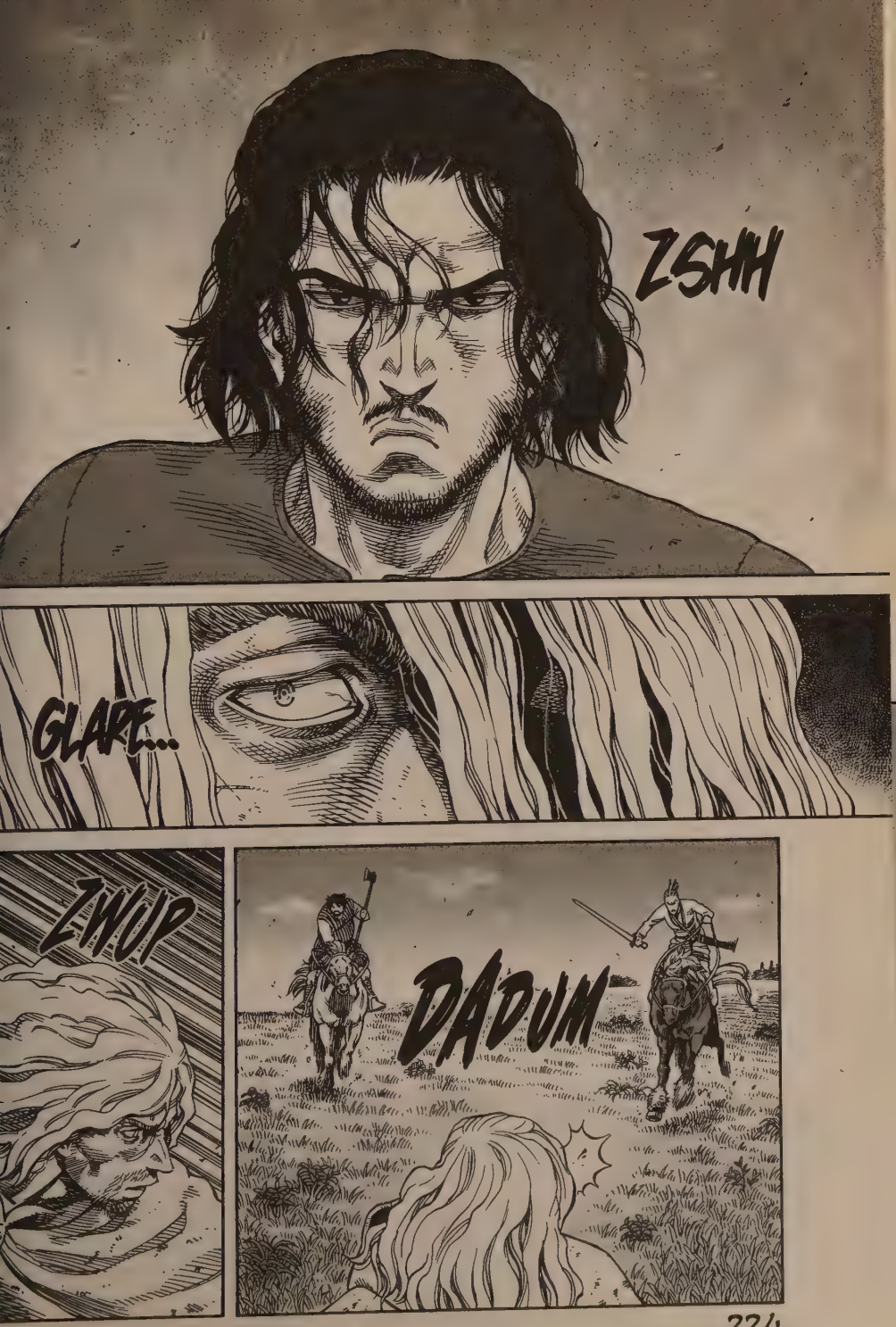


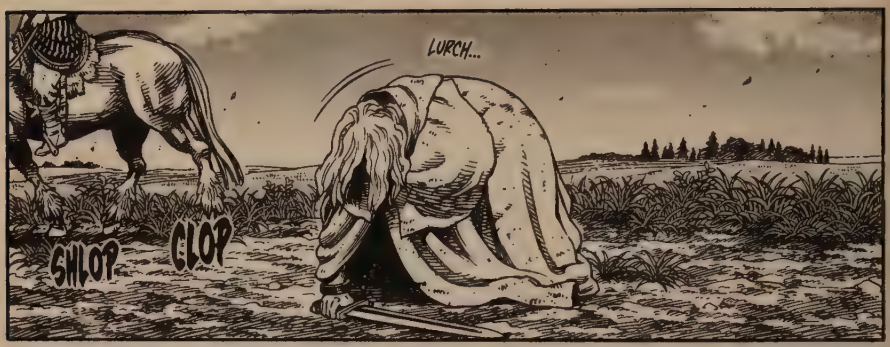

COME.
CLINK...

SHLOP
SHUK

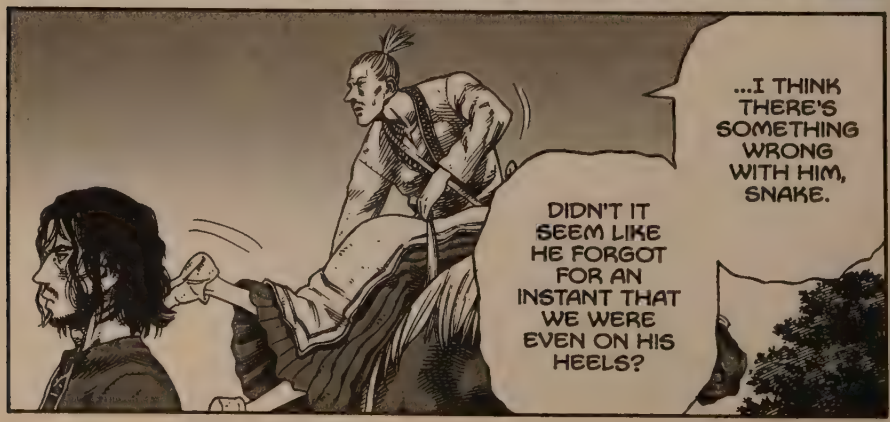

LET'S GO BACK HOME.
THE THREE OF US.

WHU SH
SHUK
THUDD


ZSHH
GLARE...
ZWUP
DADUM


LURCH...
SHLOP
CLOP

KAAAHH

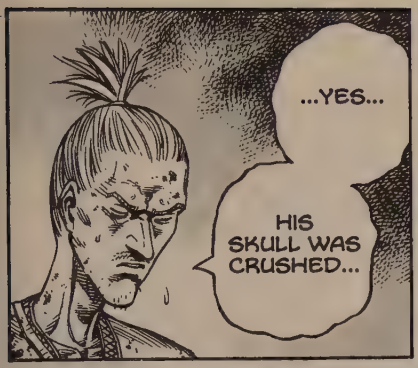

DIDN'T IT SEEM LIKE HE FORGOT FOR AN INSTANT THAT WE WERE EVEN ON HIS HEELS?
...I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH HIM, SNAKE.

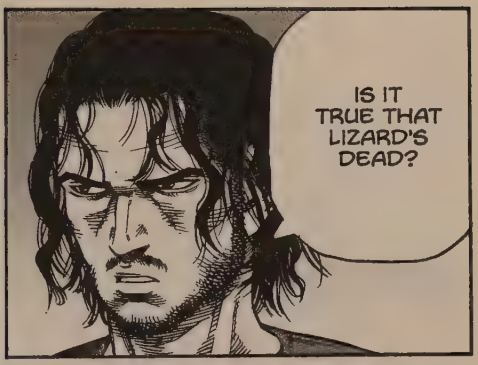
FOX! TAKE ARNHEID AND GET HER OUT OF HERE!!
GAR-DAR!!

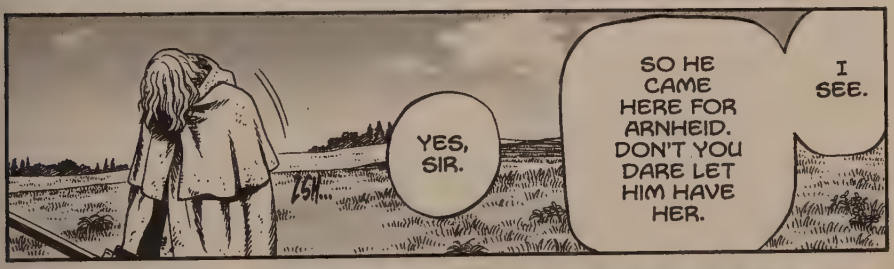
WHAT IF I AM?
...

THEN YOU DIE.
HSSSS

STOP IT, GARDAR! GET AWAY NOW!!
YOU'LL GET YOUR-SELF KILLED!!

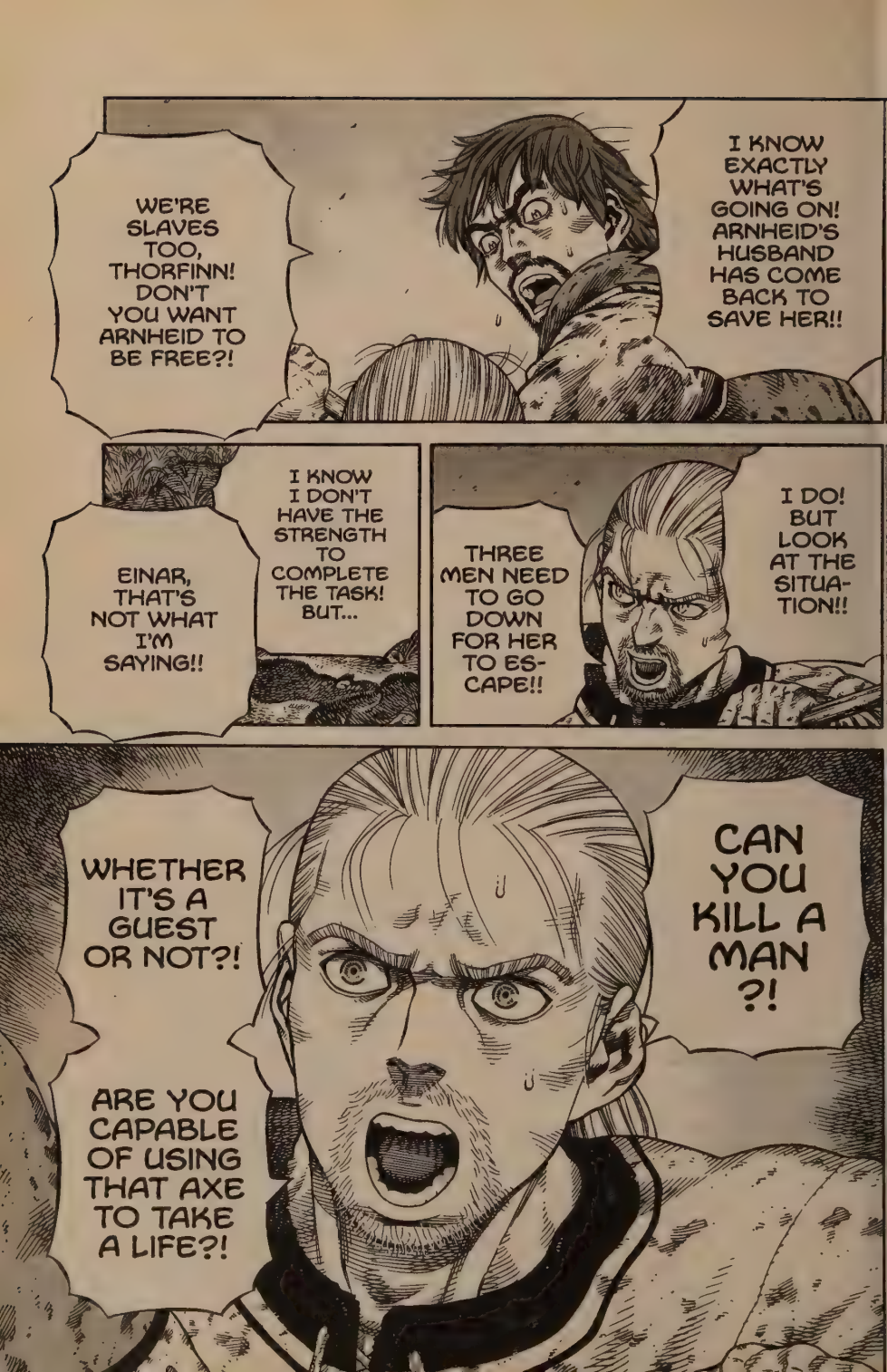

...YES...
HIS SKULL WAS CRUSHED...


IS IT TRUE THAT LIZARD'S DEAD?

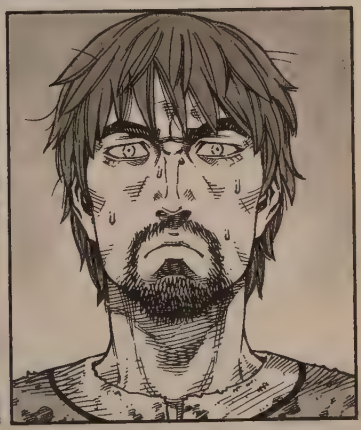

YES, SIR.
SO HE CAME HERE FOR ARNHEID. DON'T YOU DARE LET HIM HAVE HER.
I SEE.

ARE YOU KETIL?

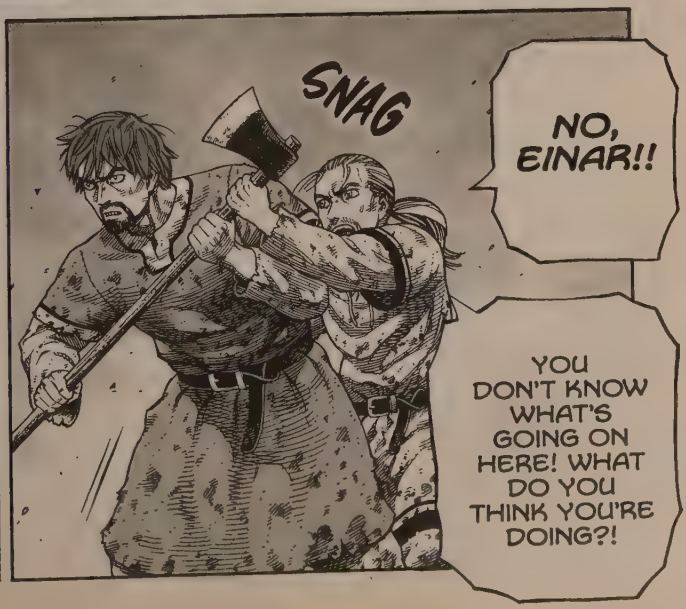
...
LURCH...

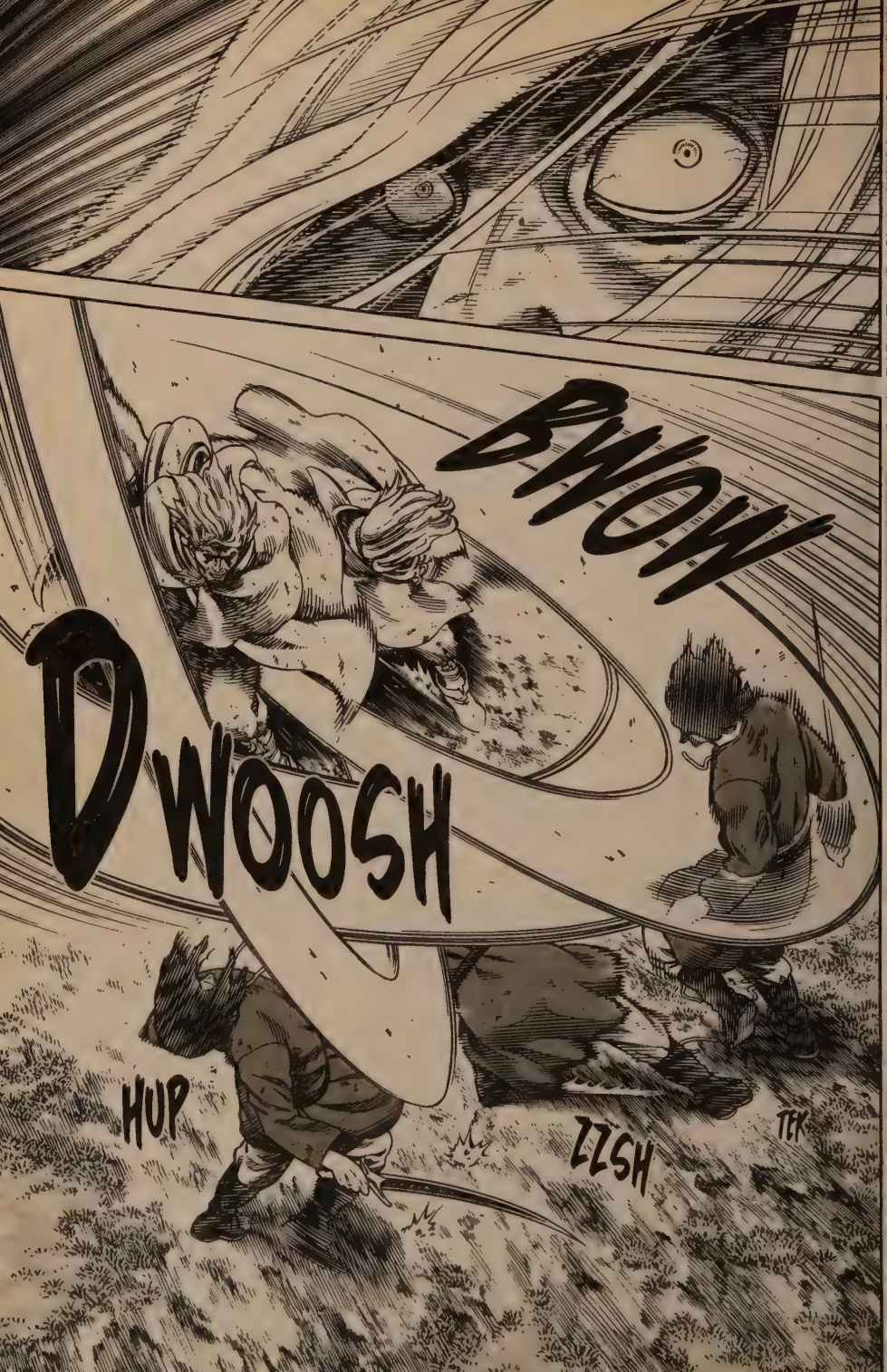

WE'RE SLAVES TOO, THORFINN! DON'T YOU WANT ARNHEID TO BE FREE?!
I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT'S GOING ON! ARNHEID'S HUSBAND HAS COME BACK TO SAVE HER!!
EINAR, THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M SAYING!!
I KNOW I DON'T HAVE THE STRENGTH TO COMPLETE THE TASK! BUT...
THREE MEN NEED TO GO DOWN FOR HER TO ES-CAPE!!
I DO! BUT LOOK AT THE SITUA-TION!!
WHETHER IT'S A GUEST OR NOT?!
ARE YOU CAPABLE OF USING THAT AXE TO TAKE A LIFE?!
CAN YOU KILL A MAN ?!

GRK

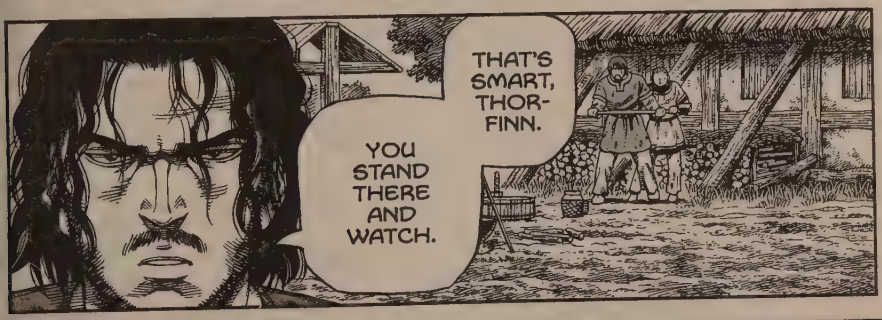


ARE YOU GOING TO SWING AT SNAKE WITH THAT AXE?!


SNAG
NO, EINAR!!
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON HERE! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!


BWOW
WOOSH
HUP
ZZSH
TEK

...BUT...
BUT... WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?!


THAT'S SMART, THOR-FINN.
YOU STAND THERE AND WATCH.

WE NEED TO QUESTION HIM AND LEARN WHO HE IS...
I'LL TAKE HIM ALIVE.
ZSH
TIK

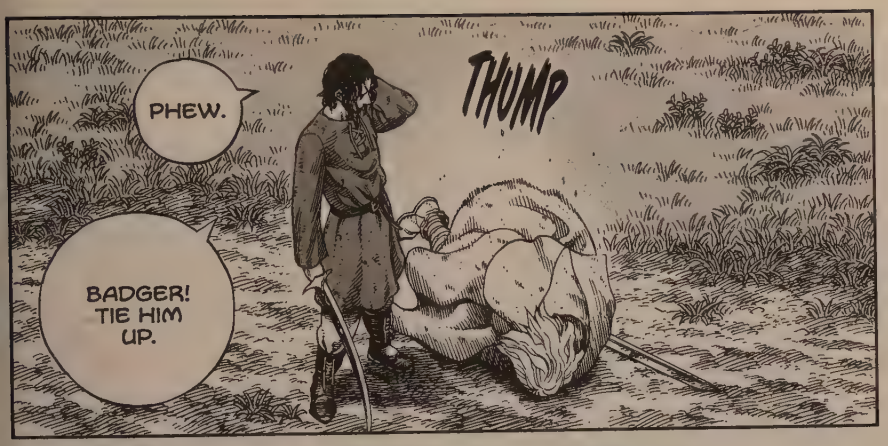
JUST KILL HIM!!
NO, SHUT UP!! I'M JUST GETTING LOOSENED UP!!
YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO TAKE HIM ALIVE!! THAT'S HOW WE FAILED ALREADY!!
I'M ASHAMED TO ADMIT...
HUH?
ER, NO...
SPEAKING OF WHICH, DID YOU EVEN MANAGE TO *HIT* HIM AT ANY POINT?
THREE MEN AGAINST ONE INJURED, AND YOU *LOST*?
HE'S ALREADY WOUNDED.
ZWAA

WATCH OUT, SNAKE!
HE'S REAL TOUGH!!
WHO...
...DO YOU THINK...
...YOU'RE TALKING TO?!
HUP!
HUP.
TEP...
TEP.
FWUMM
WHOA!!
FFFHH

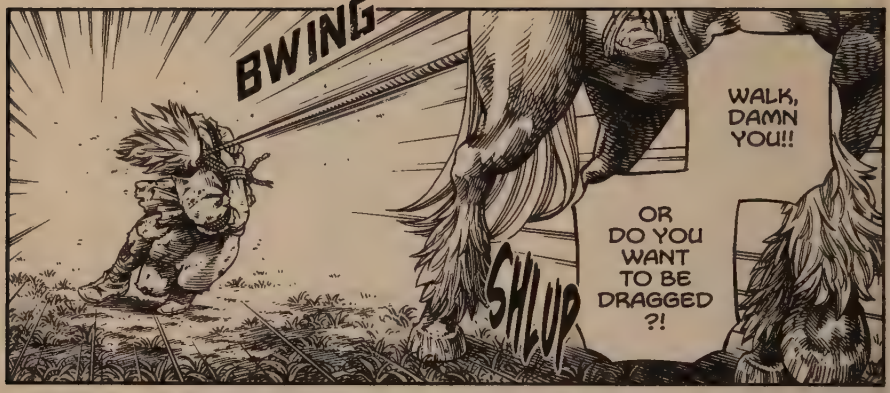
HRG... UH...
UMM
CHK
THAT'S THE SPOT.

FVO OSH
KCHAK

CHAPTER 81: STORM

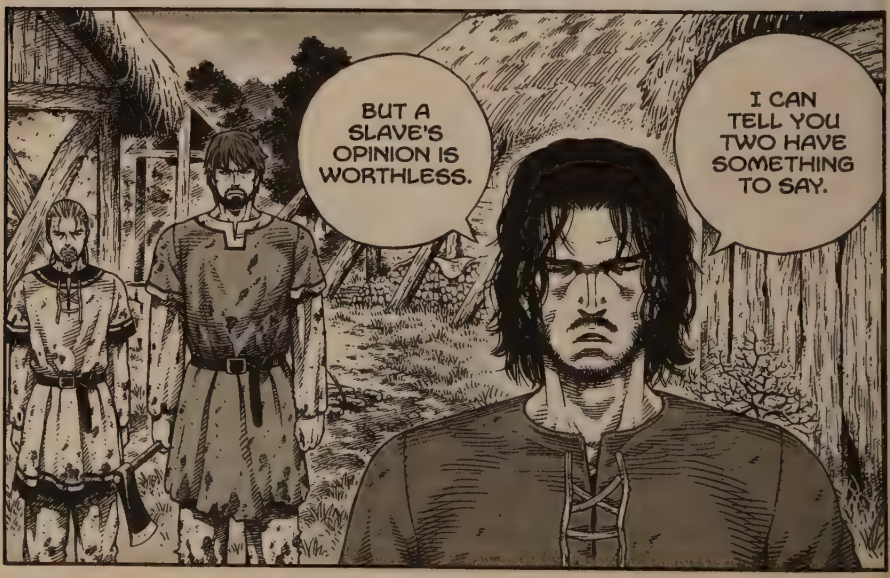

PHEW.
THUMP
BADGER! TIE HIM UP.

AND NOW THE BOUNTY IS OURS!
NO WAY! YOU FINISHED HIM IN TWO SECONDS FLAT!
GAR-DAR?! GAR-DAAAR!!

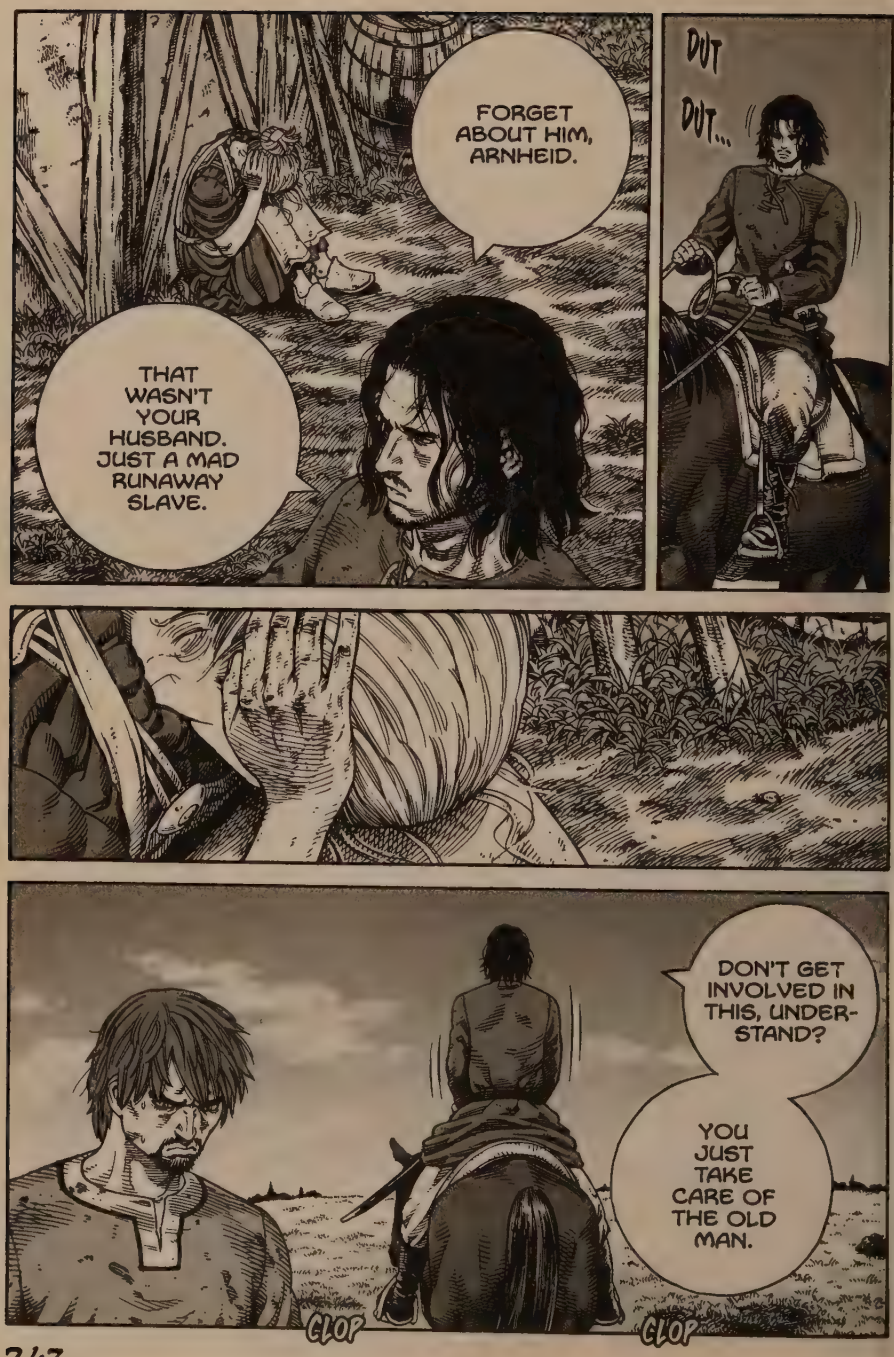

BWING
SHLUP
WALK, DAMN YOU!!
OR DO YOU WANT TO BE DRAGGED ?!

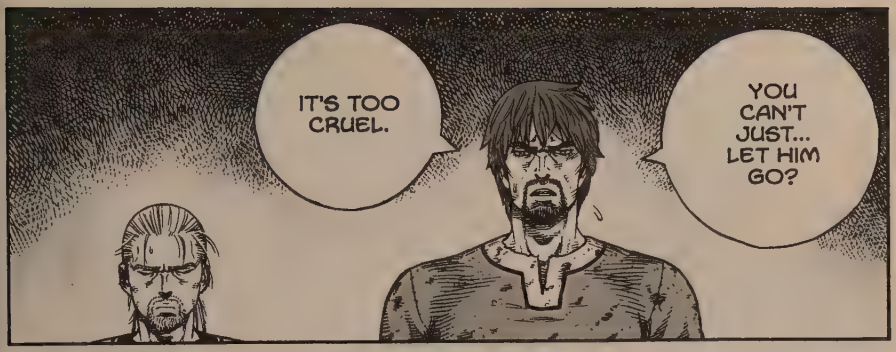
NOW...

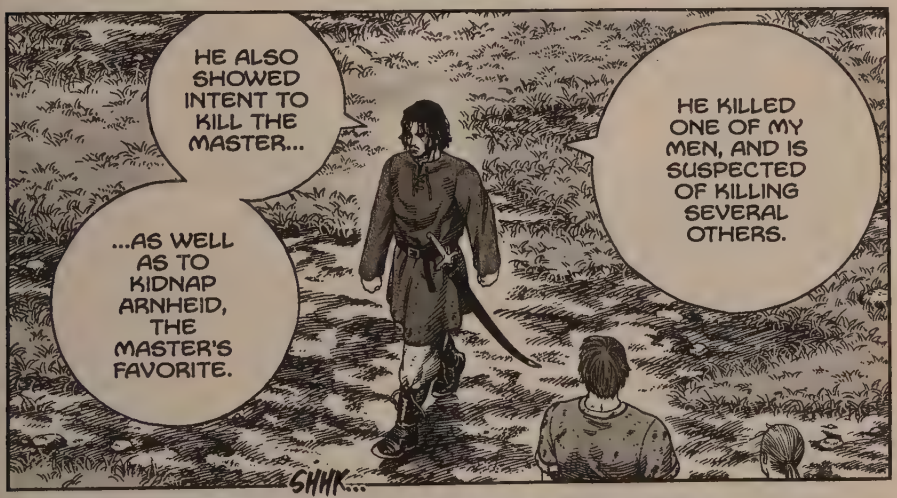
ARNHEIIIID!
ARNHEIIIID!


BUT A SLAVE'S OPINION IS WORTHLESS.
I CAN TELL YOU TWO HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY.

ARN-HEIIIID!!
ARNHEIIIID!
YES SIR.
ALSO, SEND A MESSAGE TO KJALLAKR'S UNCLE OR WHOEVER THAT WE'VE CAUGHT THEIR FUGITIVE.
DON'T BE CARELESS AROUND HIM. KEEP FIVE GUARDS AT ALL TIMES.
ARNHEIIIID!


FORGET ABOUT HIM, ARNHEID.
THAT WASN'T YOUR HUSBAND. JUST A MAD RUNAWAY SLAVE.
DUT DUT...
DON'T GET INVOLVED IN THIS, UNDER-STAND?
YOU JUST TAKE CARE OF THE OLD MAN.
CLOP
CLOP


IT'S TOO CRUEL.
YOU CAN'T JUST... LET HIM GO?


HE ALSO SHOWED INTENT TO KILL THE MASTER...
...AS WELL AS TO KIDNAP ARNHEID, THE MASTER'S FAVORITE.
HE KILLED ONE OF MY MEN, AND IS SUSPECTED OF KILLING SEVERAL OTHERS.
SHHK...

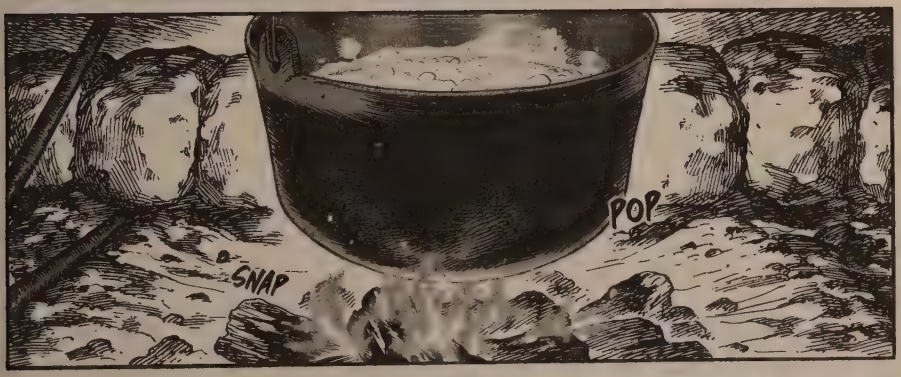
GLUMP...

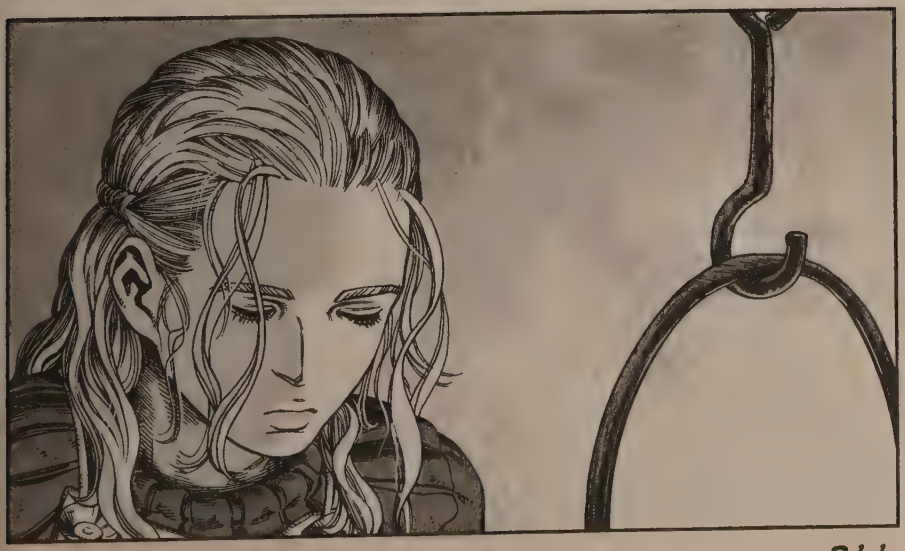
YOU CAN'T LET A MAN LIKE THAT GO FREE.

TUP
TUP
TUP
TUP
TUP
TUP
TUP
TUP
TUP
TUP
TUP
TUP...

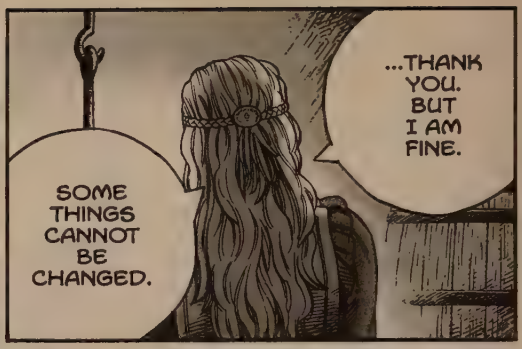
WHOOOSH...

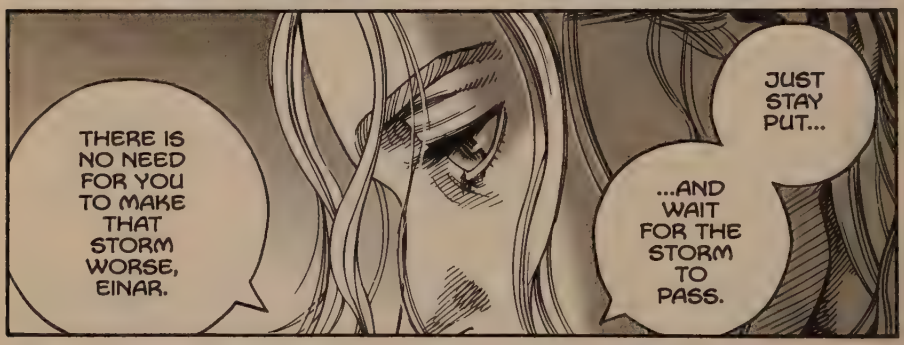
FSSHH...



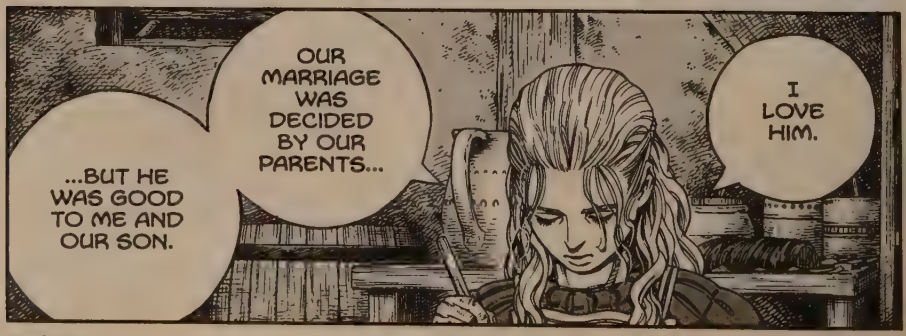


WHEN IT COMES TO ONE OF THOSE THINGS, IT'S BEST TO DO NOTHING.


SOME THINGS CANNOT BE CHANGED.
...THANK YOU. BUT I AM FINE.


THERE IS NO NEED FOR YOU TO MAKE THAT STORM WORSE, EINAR.
JUST STAY PUT...
...AND WAIT FOR THE STORM TO PASS.

LUH-
LOVE... GARDAR...?
...BUT... DON'T YOU...

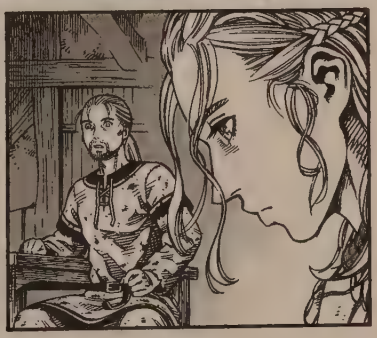

...BUT HE WAS GOOD TO ME AND OUR SON.
OUR MARRIAGE WAS DECIDED BY OUR PARENTS...
I LOVE HIM.

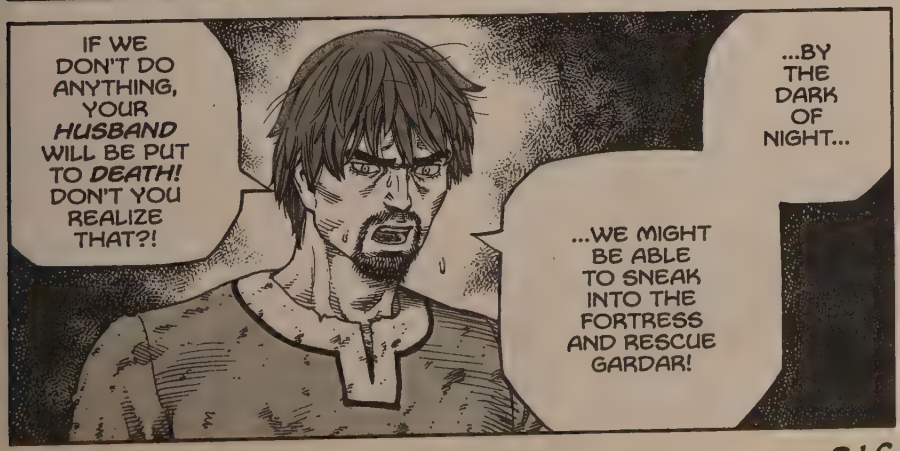
EINAR!

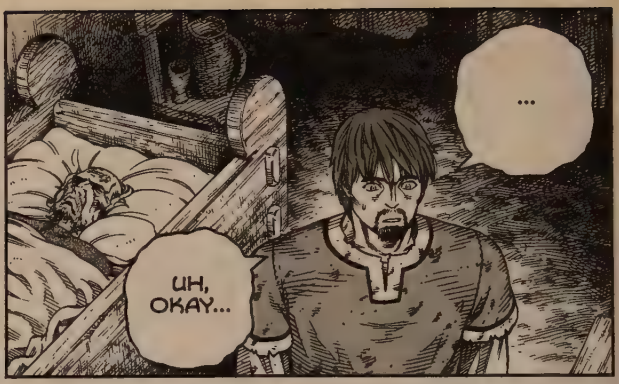
NAR, AIT

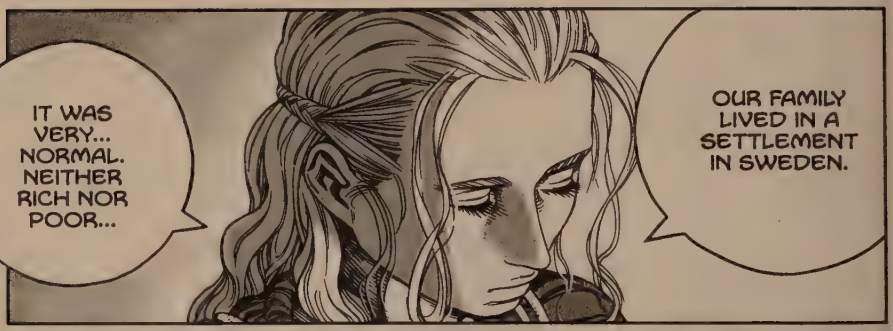
!

THUNK





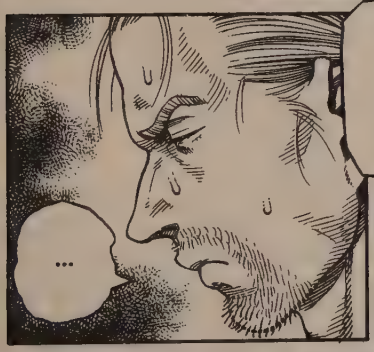




WHEN MY SON WAS A YEAR OLD, WE DISCOVERED A SWAMPLAND WITH IRON DEPOSITS WITHIN THE DISTANT WOODS...

THERE WAS A SQUABBLE OVER THE RIGHTS TO THE SWAMP BETWEEN SEVERAL SIDES, AND FIGHTING BROKE OUT.

EVEN IF IT MEANS FIGHTING SNAKE AND HIS MEN, IT'S BETTER THAN DOING NOTHING!
IN THAT CASE, WE OUGHT TO ACT!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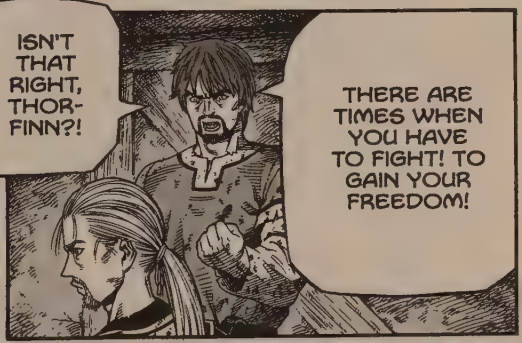
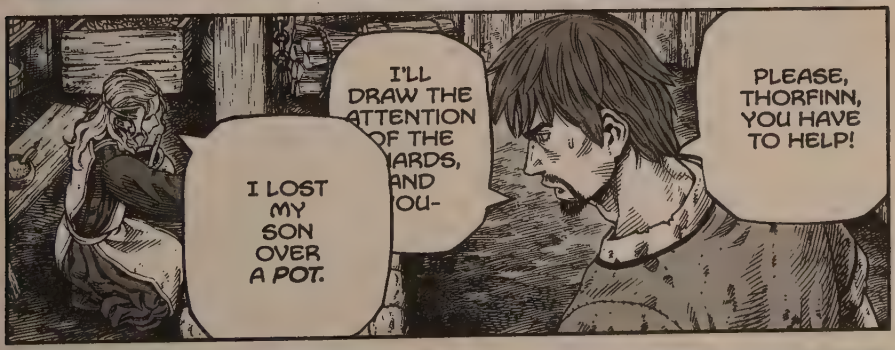
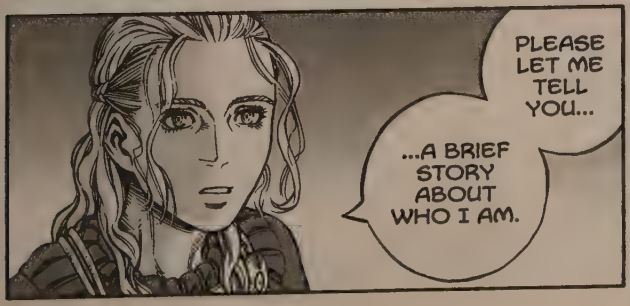
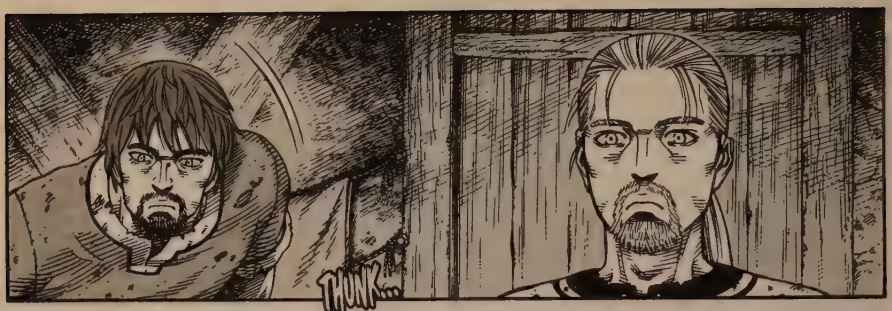
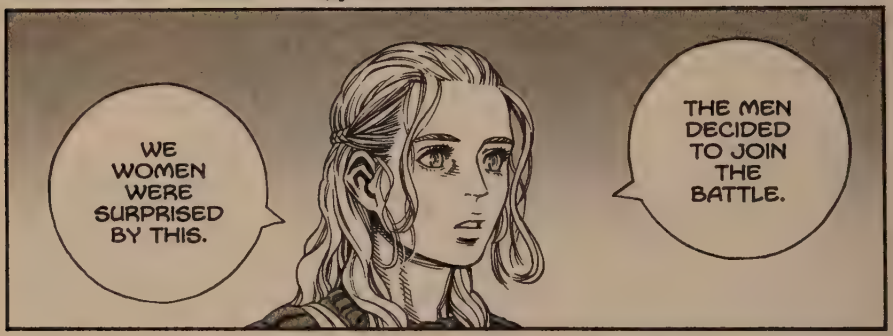

ISN'T THAT RIGHT, THOR-FINN?!
THERE ARE TIMES WHEN YOU HAVE TO FIGHT! TO GAIN YOUR FREEDOM!


I LOST MY SON OVER A POT.
I'LL DRAW THE ATTENTION OF THE GUARDS, AND YOU-
PLEASE, THORFINN, YOU HAVE TO HELP!


PLEASE LET ME TELL YOU...
...A BRIEF STORY ABOUT WHO I AM.


THUNK...


WE WOMEN WERE SURPRISED BY THIS.
THE MEN DECIDED TO JOIN THE BATTLE.

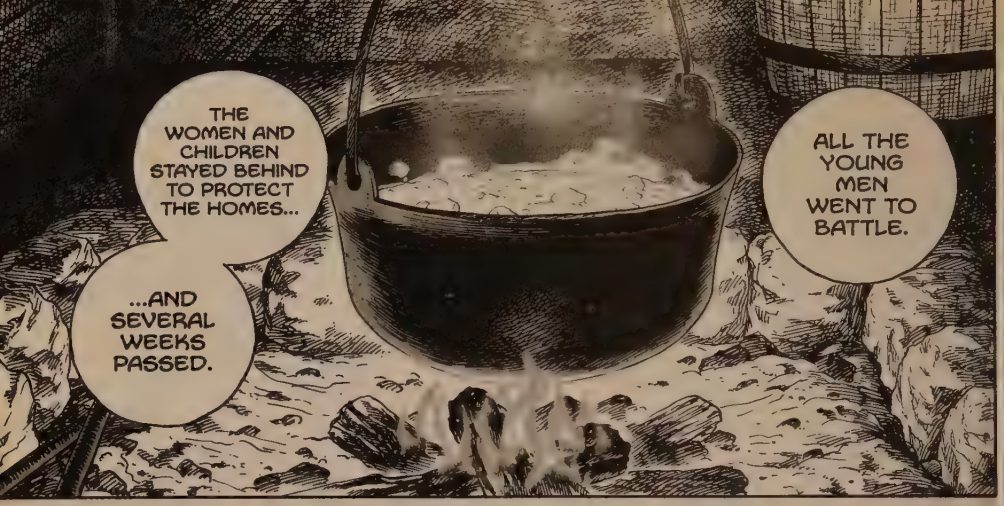
THE MEN WERE GOING TO RISK THEIR LIVES FOR SOMETHING WE DIDN'T NEED.
OUR SETTLEMENT WAS NOT LACKING FOR POTS OR SICKLES.

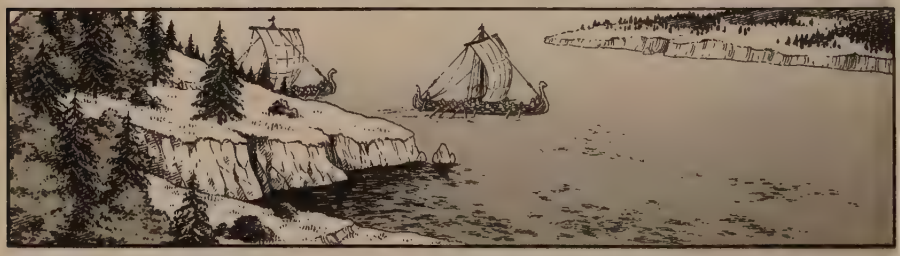
AND YET...
...THE WOMEN COULD NOT CHANGE THEIR MINDS.

ONE OF GARDAR'S FRIENDS WAS INVOLVED IN THE CONFLICT...
...AND CAME TO HIM FOR HELP.

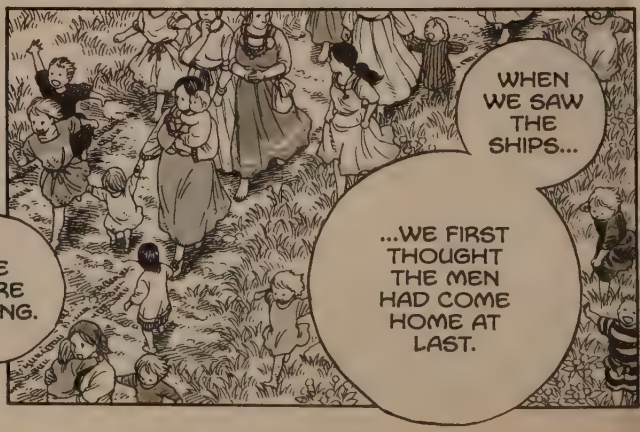
GARDAR INFORMED THE VILLAGE OF THIS FACT...
...AND ALL THE MEN HAD AN OPEN DISCUSSION.

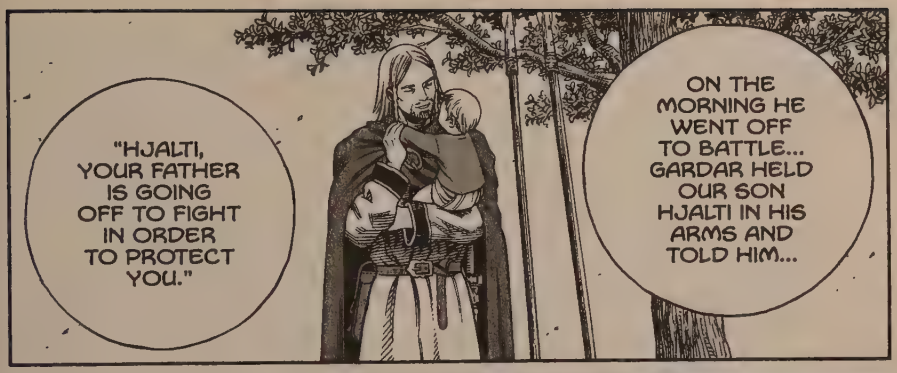
"DO WE PARTICIPATE IN THE FIGHT OR NOT?"
IF WE WIN, WE WILL GAIN IRON.

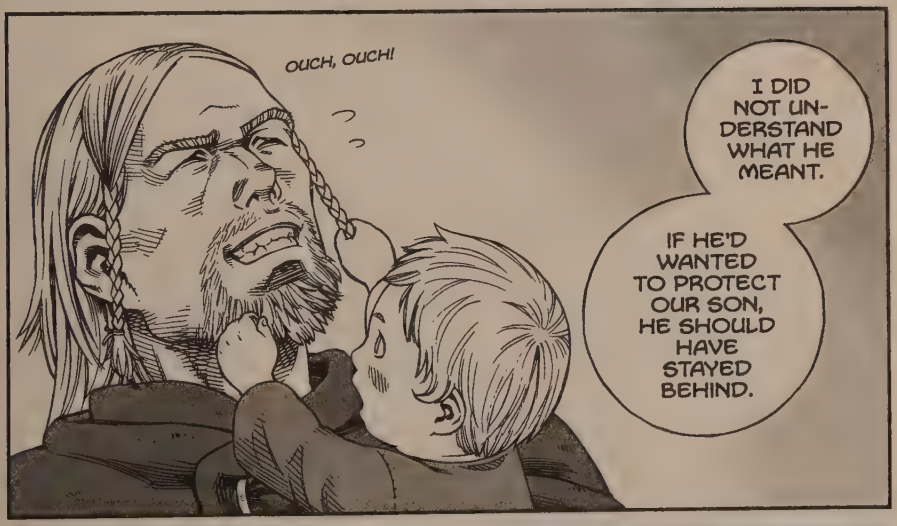

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN STAYED BEHIND TO PROTECT THE HOMES...
ALL THE YOUNG MEN WENT TO BATTLE.
...AND SEVERAL WEEKS PASSED.

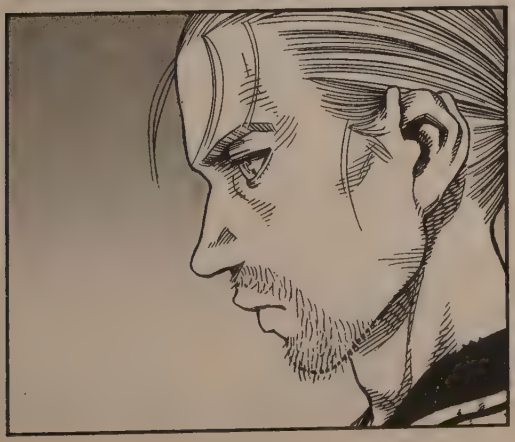


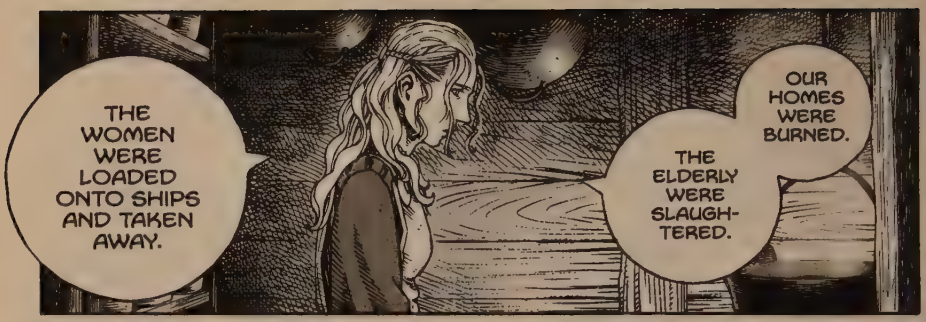
WE WERE WRONG.

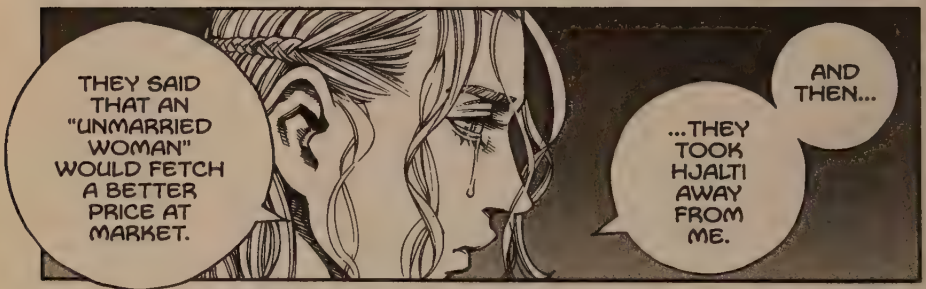

WHEN WE SAW THE SHIPS...
...WE FIRST THOUGHT THE MEN HAD COME HOME AT LAST.


"HJALTI, YOUR FATHER IS GOING OFF TO FIGHT IN ORDER TO PROTECT YOU."
ON THE MORNING HE WENT OFF TO BATTLE... GARDAR HELD OUR SON HJALTI IN HIS ARMS AND TOLD HIM...

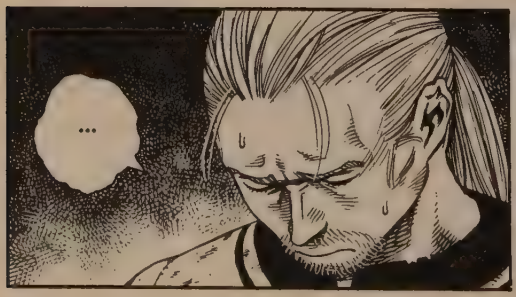

OUCH, OUCH!
I DID NOT UN-DERSTAND WHAT HE MEANT.
IF HE'D WANTED TO PROTECT OUR SON, HE SHOULD HAVE STAYED BEHIND.




THE WOMEN WERE LOADED ONTO SHIPS AND TAKEN AWAY.
THE ELDERLY WERE SLAUGHTERED.
OUR HOMES WERE BURNED.


THEY SAID THAT AN "UNMARRIED WOMAN" WOULD FETCH A BETTER PRICE AT MARKET.
...THEY TOOK HJALTI AWAY FROM ME.
AND THEN...

IF HE'D JUST *WEATHERED THE STORM*...
BUT INSTEAD, OUR SUFFERING NEVER ENDED.
IF GARDAR HADN'T GONE OFF TO TAKE PART IN THAT BATTLE...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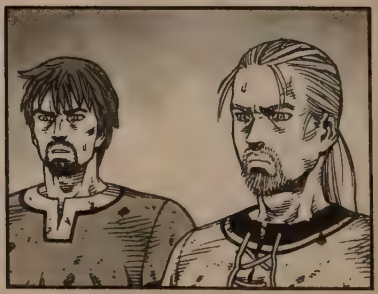
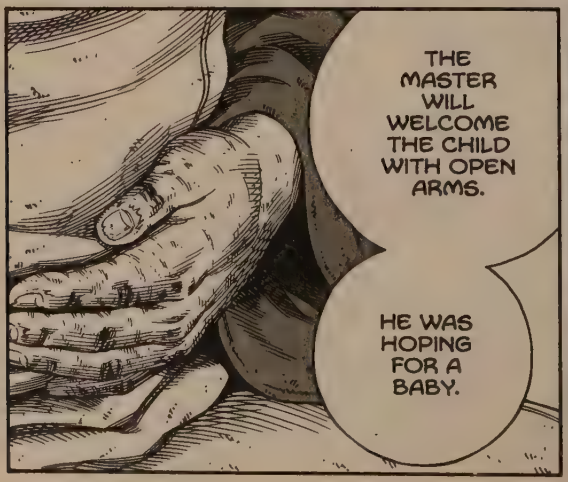


IT WAS THE ENEMY.
THEY STRUCK WHEN THEY KNEW OUR MENFOLK WERE GONE.

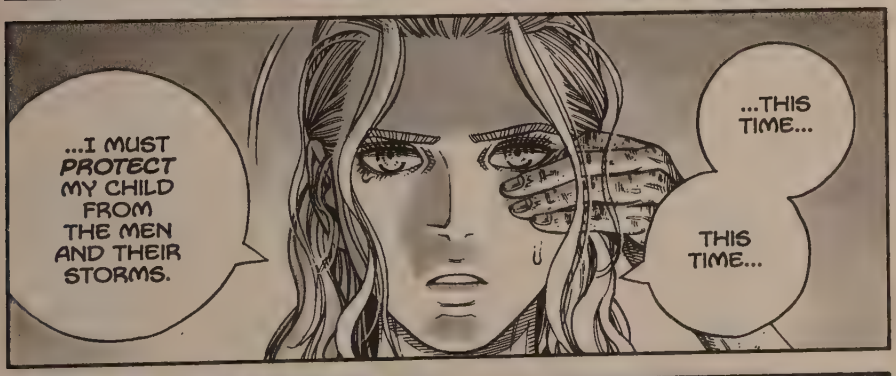
I AM CARRYING THE CHILD OF THE MASTER NOW.

I LEARNED JUST DAYS AGO.



I'M CERTAIN THAT GREAT SUFFERING CHANGED HIM FOR THE WORSE.
WHEN I SAW HIM... TODAY...
I WAS TERRIFIED OF HIM.

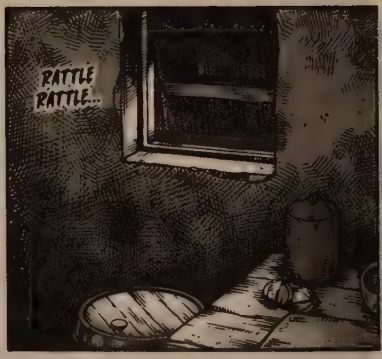
NOW HE *IS* THE STORM.

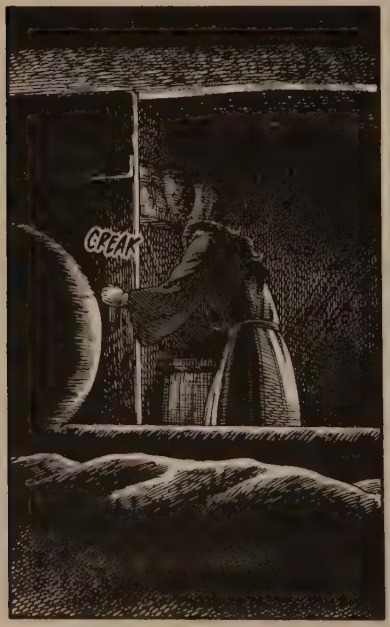

...I MUST *PROTECT* MY CHILD FROM THE MEN AND THEIR STORMS.
...THIS TIME...
THIS TIME...

...
CH... CHILD?

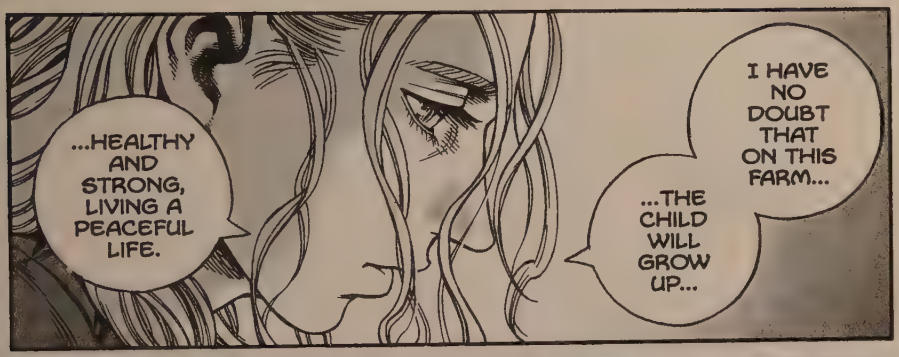
BWOOOOSH

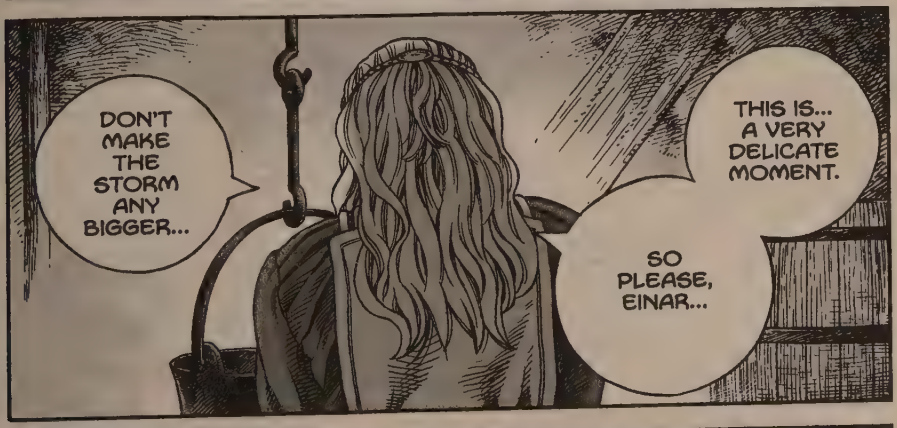
THUNK...


RATTLE
RATTLE...


CREAK

SHH...


...HEALTHY AND STRONG, LIVING A PEACEFUL LIFE.
...THE CHILD WILL GROW UP...
I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT ON THIS FARM...


DON'T MAKE THE STORM ANY BIGGER...
THIS IS... A VERY DELICATE MOMENT.
SO PLEASE, EINAR...

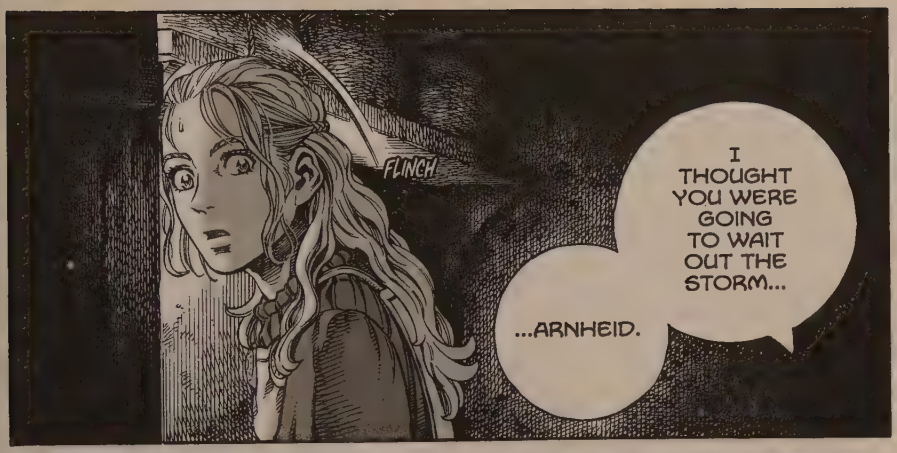
SNAP....

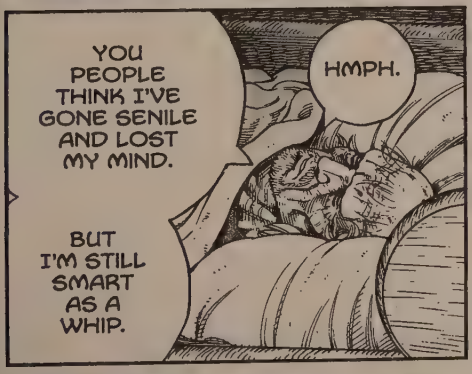
PERHAPS I SHOULDN'T ATTEMPT TO SEE GARDAR AGAIN...
PERHAPS... I'M MAKING THE WRONG CHOICE...

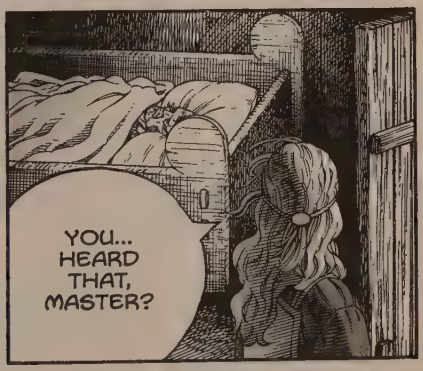
...I'M SORRY I CAN'T HELP YOU.
I WON'T BLAME YOU. IT'S YOUR CHOICE.

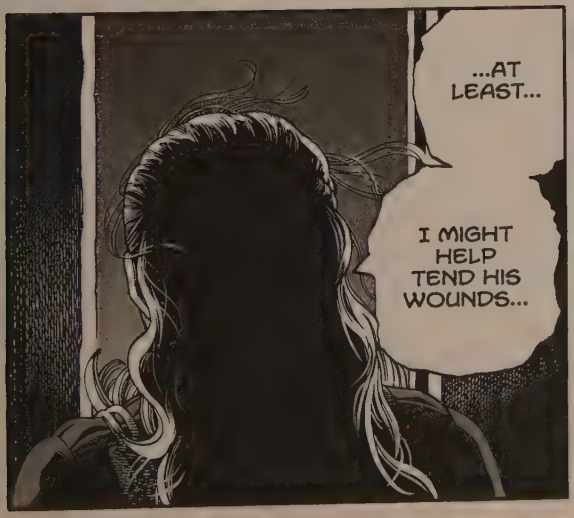
THUMP

I'LL BE BACK SOON.
CREAK


FLINCH
I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO WAIT OUT THE STORM...
...ARNHEID.


YOU PEOPLE THINK I'VE GONE SENILE AND LOST MY MIND.
HMPH.
BUT I'M STILL SMART AS A WHIP.

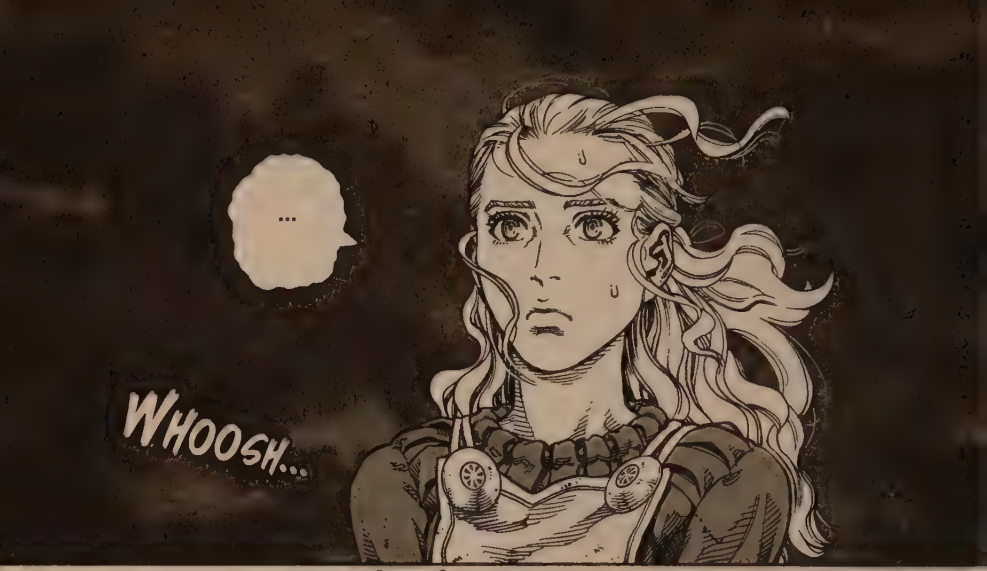

YOU... HEARD THAT, MASTER?


...AT LEAST...
I MIGHT HELP TEND HIS WOUNDS...

WHOOSH

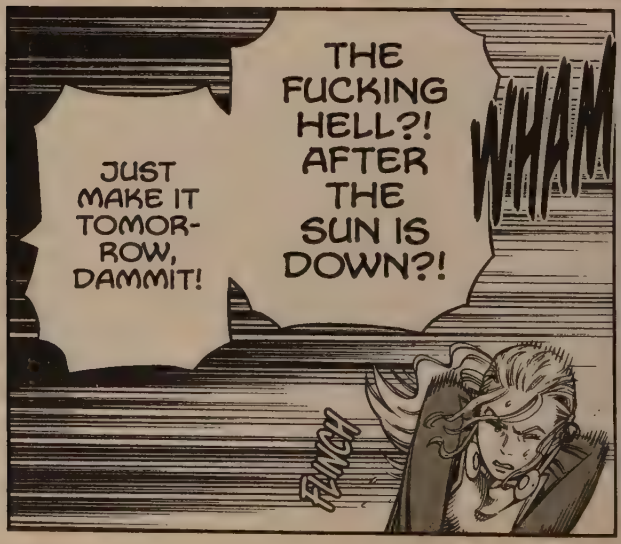
CHAPTER 82: BONDAGE

CHAPTER 81 - END


...
WHOOSH...

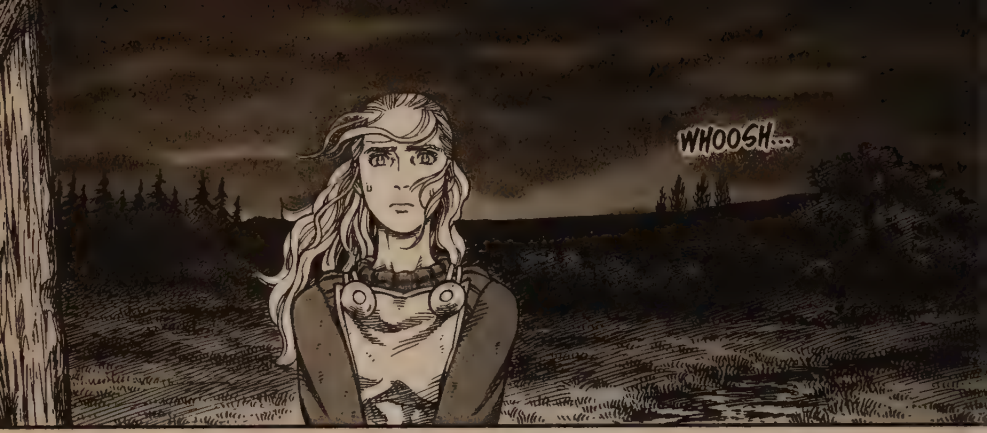
DSSHHH...
THUD
KTAKK

GYA HA HA HA!


JUST MAKE IT TOMOR-ROW, DAMMIT!
THE FUCKING HELL?! AFTER THE SUN IS DOWN?!
WHAM
FLINCH

SHHH...

ZZSHHH
DSHH
DRIP
DRIP DRIP
DSSHHH...
GUEST (BODYGUARD) LODGING, KETIL'S FARM


WHOOSH...

...GREAT.
UGH...
...

DID YOU... TEND TO HIS WOUNDS?
BUT... HE'S HURT, ISN'T HE?

AND WHY WOULD WE DO THAT?
WHAT DUTY DO I HAVE TO PATCH UP THE MAN WHO KILLED ONE OF MY OWN?

SNAKE... PLEASE LET ME SEE MY HUSBAND!
NO.

FSSSHHH

STUPID OLD BITCH.

NEVER SAYS A WORD ABOUT OUR SECURITY METHODS UNTIL THIS EXACT MOMENT!

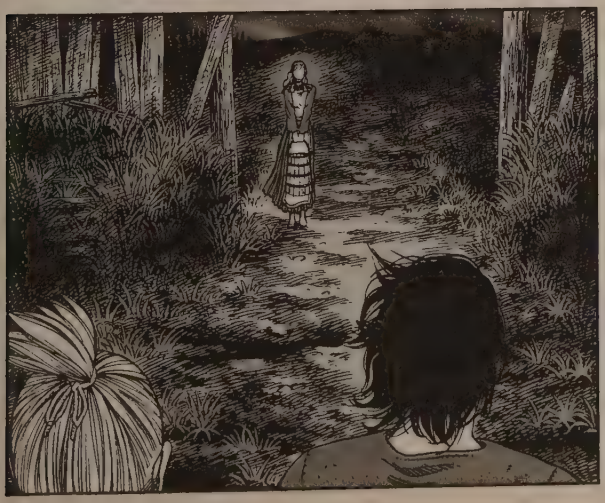
L-LOOK, IT WASN'T MY IDEA.

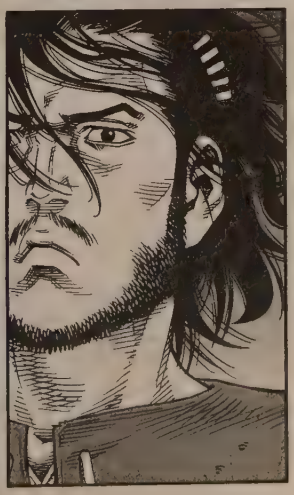
THE MADAM'S CALLING.

WHAT ?!

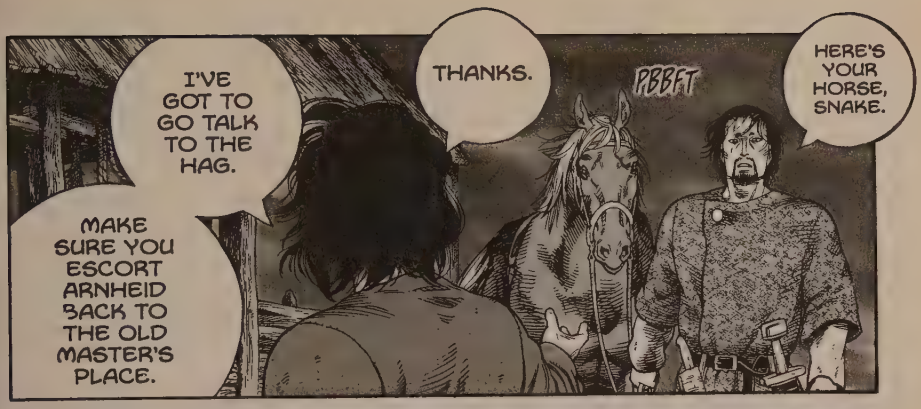
YOU THINK THE MISERLY BROAD'S GONNA DEMAND A SHARE?! SHE'D BETTER NOT!

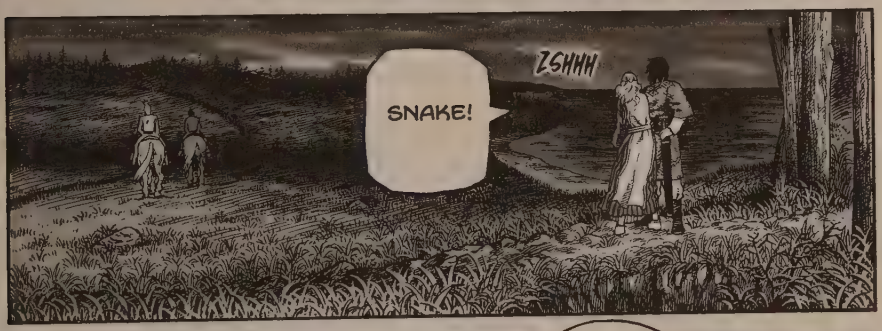
YOU SUPPOSE IT'S ABOUT THE THREE-HORSE REWARD?





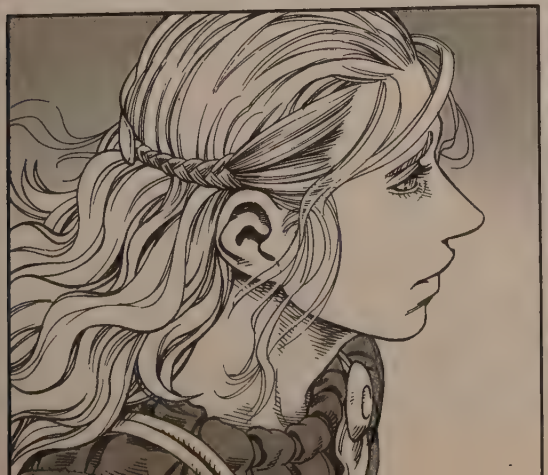
NO WONDER HER HUSBAND'S COME BACK FOR HER...
...WELL, WELL...
!
BA-THUMP
ER, I...
UH.
I ONLY WANT TO TEND TO HIS WOUNDS! THAT'S ALL!
I SWEAR TO YOU THAT I WILL NOT ATTEMPT TO FREE HIM!
PLEASE! I BEG OF YOU, LET ME SEE MY HUSBAND!
UH, BUT...
SNAKE SAID...
PLEASE...


I'VE GOT TO GO TALK TO THE HAG.
MAKE SURE YOU ESCORT ARNHEID BACK TO THE OLD MASTER'S PLACE.
THANKS.
PBBFT
HERE'S YOUR HORSE, SNAKE.


SNAKE!
ZSHHH

...GREAT...

DAMN, NOW I HAVE TO WALK HER BACK? THAT'S JUST...
OH!!
AWW, HE JUST TOOK THE LAST HORSE.



ARN-HEID!!
CUT MY ROPES, ARNHEID.
LET'S GO BACK HOME.
...THEY BEAT YOU...

WHOA, WHOA, WHAT'S THIS?

THAT'S MASTER KETIL'S PRETTY YOUNG THING, ISN'T IT?

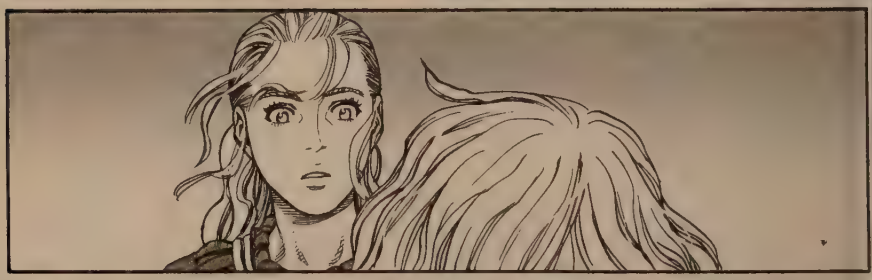
SN-SNAKE SAID...

SNAKE SAID SHE HAD PERMISSION TO TREAT GARDAR'S WOUNDS! I'M NOT LYING!

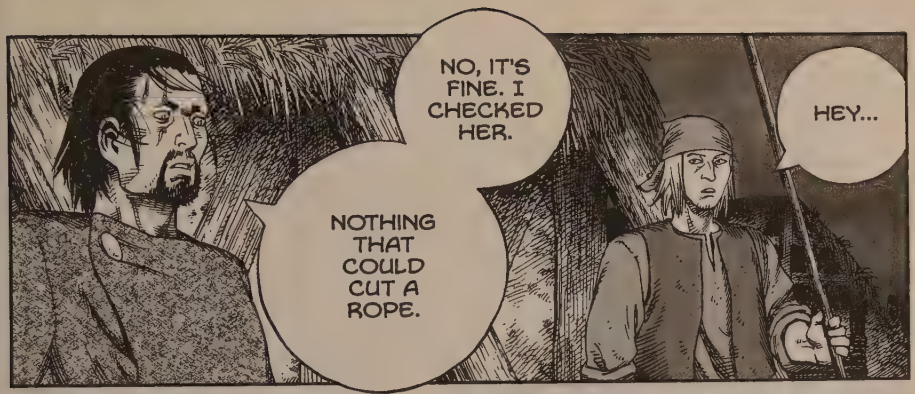
GAR-DAR!!

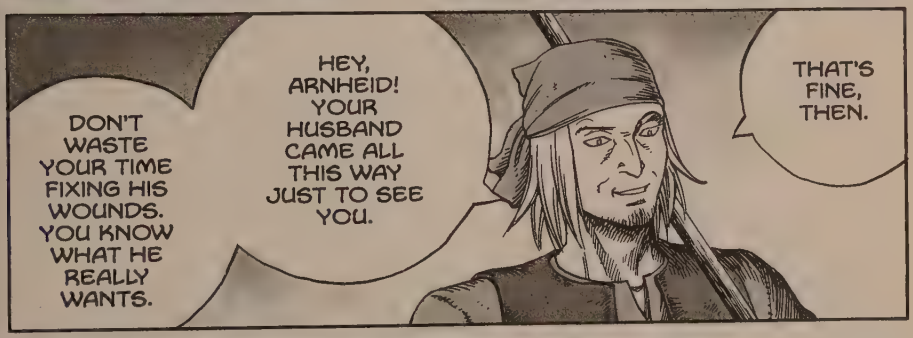
ARNHEID.
I'M SORRY...

HA HA HA HA!

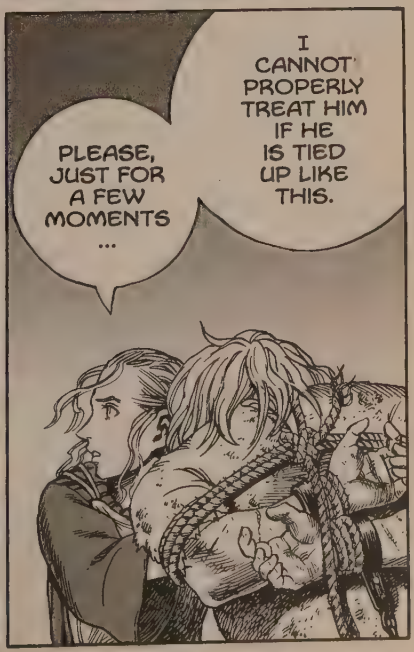


I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU AND HJALTI AGAIN.
CAN YOU... FORGIVE ME...?


NO, IT'S FINE. I CHECKED HER.
HEY...
NOTHING THAT COULD CUT A ROPE.


DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME FIXING HIS WOUNDS. YOU KNOW WHAT HE REALLY WANTS.
HEY, ARNHEID! YOUR HUSBAND CAME ALL THIS WAY JUST TO SEE YOU.
THAT'S FINE, THEN.

BWA HA HA HA HA!
SORRY, CAN'T INDULGE YOU THERE.
BUT YOU CAN INDULGE HIS COCK. WE DIDN'T TIE THAT UP, AT LEAST.


I CANNOT PROPERLY TREAT HIM IF HE IS TIED UP LIKE THIS.
PLEASE, JUST FOR A FEW MOMENTS ...

I'VE PUT YOU THROUGH HELL...
LET'S START OVER.
WE CAN DO IT RIGHT NEXT TIME.
RELEASE ME FROM MY BONDS.
THERE MUST BE A WAY...
...I'M SORRY, GARDAR...
FORGIVE ME...
I'M SORRY...

OH.
OHH...

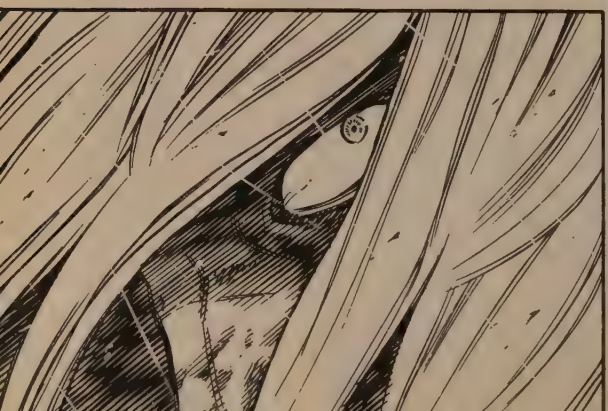
DSSHHH
YOU DONE YET? SATISFIED?
HEY.
HEY, ARNHEID!

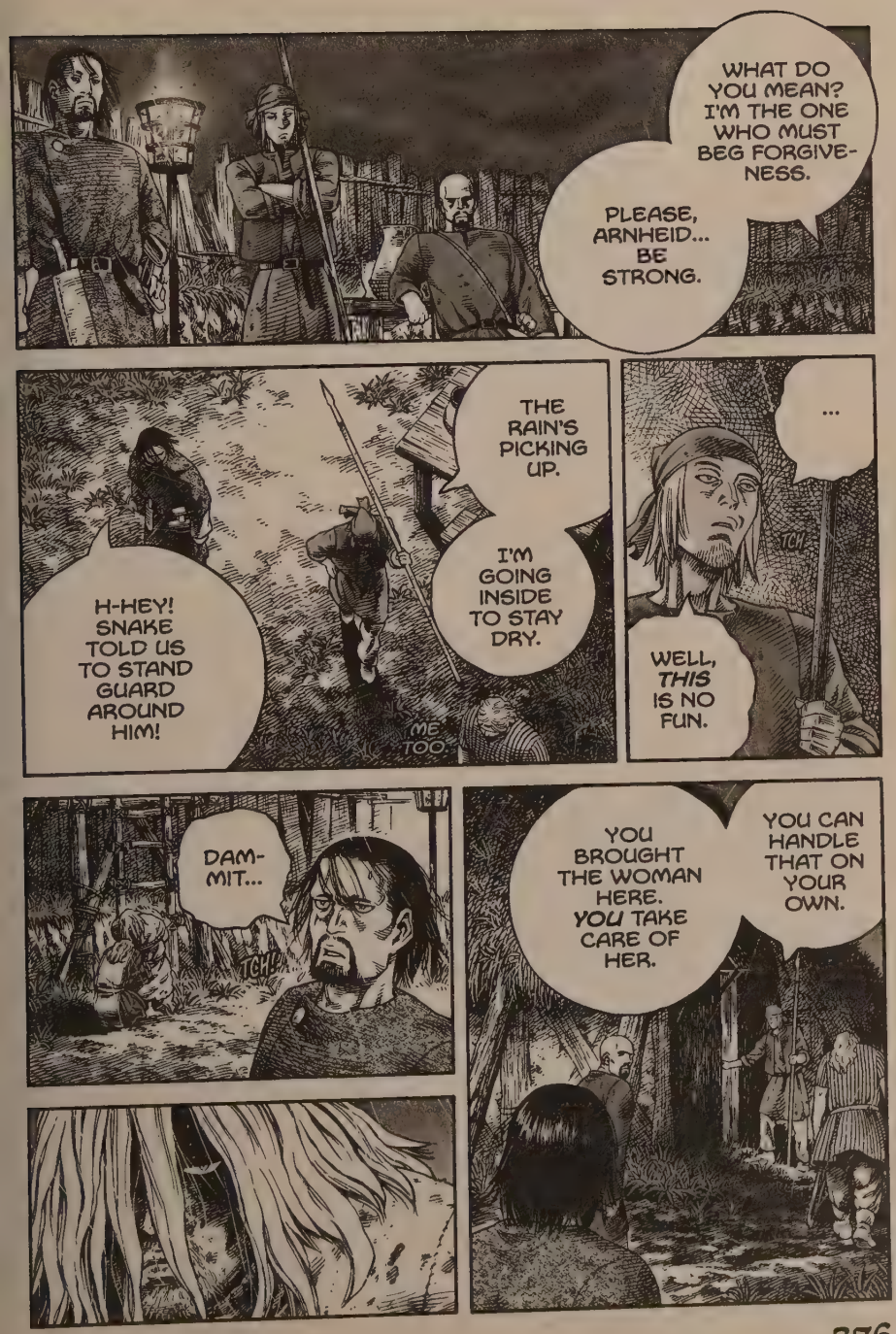
IF SNAKE FINDS OUT, I'LL REALLY GET IT.
SIGH...
UGH... IF THERE'S ONE WEAKNESS I'VE GOT, IT'S MY SOFT SPOT FOR WOMEN.

SNIFF... HIC!

HMP

YOU'VE HAD YOUR TIME.
COME, ON YOUR FEET!




WHAT DO YOU MEAN? I'M THE ONE WHO MUST BEG FORGIVENESS.
PLEASE, ARNHEID... BE STRONG.
THE RAIN'S PICKING UP.
I'M GOING INSIDE TO STAY DRY.
H-HEY! SNAKE TOLD US TO STAND GUARD AROUND HIM!
ME TOO.
...
TCH!
WELL, THIS IS NO FUN.
DAMMIT...
TCH!
YOU BROUGHT THE WOMAN HERE. YOU TAKE CARE OF HER.
YOU CAN HANDLE THAT ON YOUR OWN.

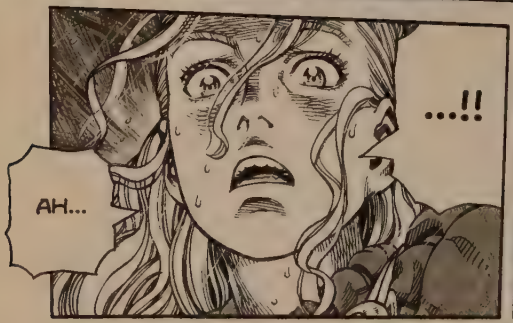
KUH...
DMM
SPLAT
AU
ZSHH
BLUP
PLWWW
...!!

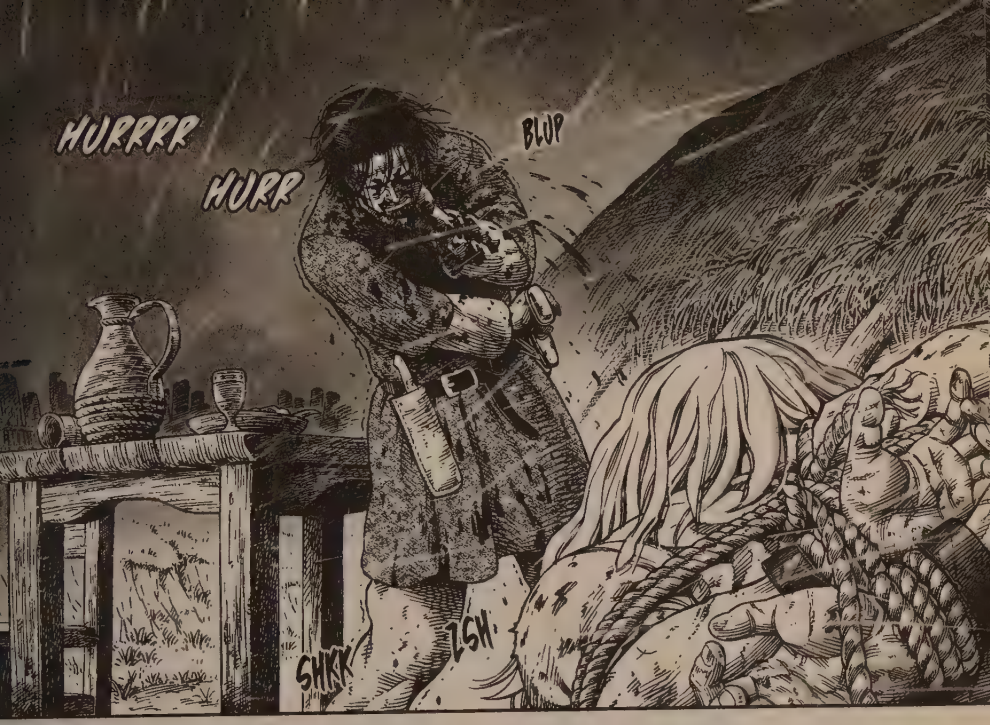
KSHUNKA

CLINK

GONK

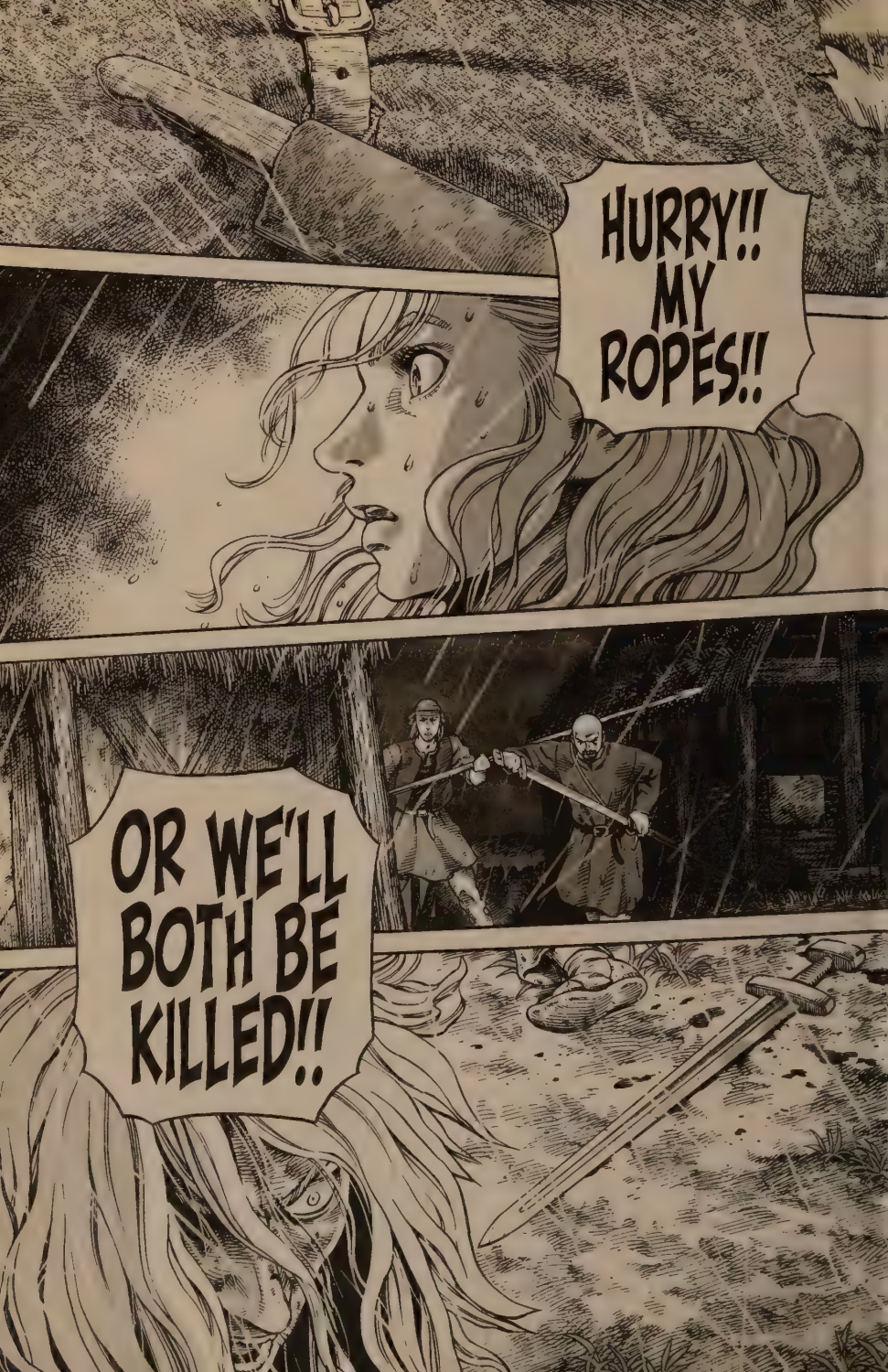
THUD




HURRRR
HURR
BLUP
SHKK
ZSH

KTHUNK

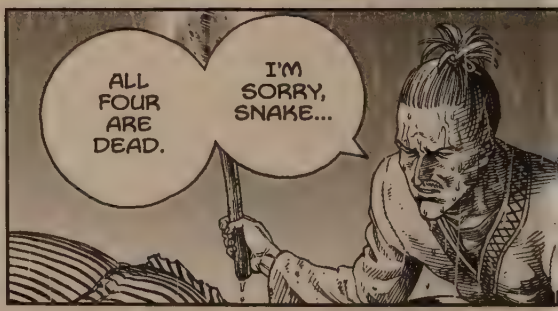
GLURK...

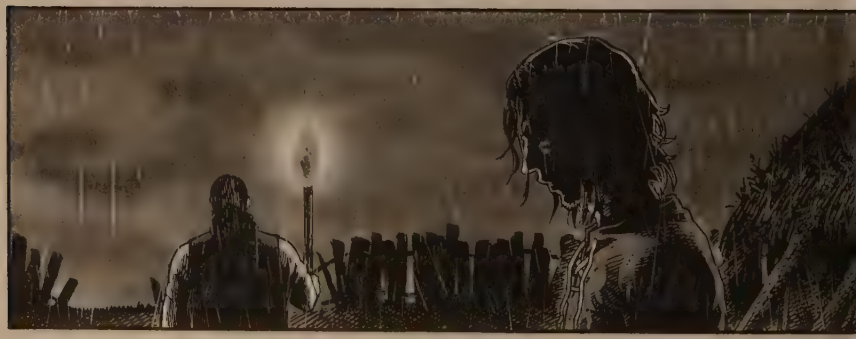

HURRY!! MY ROPES!!
OR WE'LL BOTH BE KILLED!!

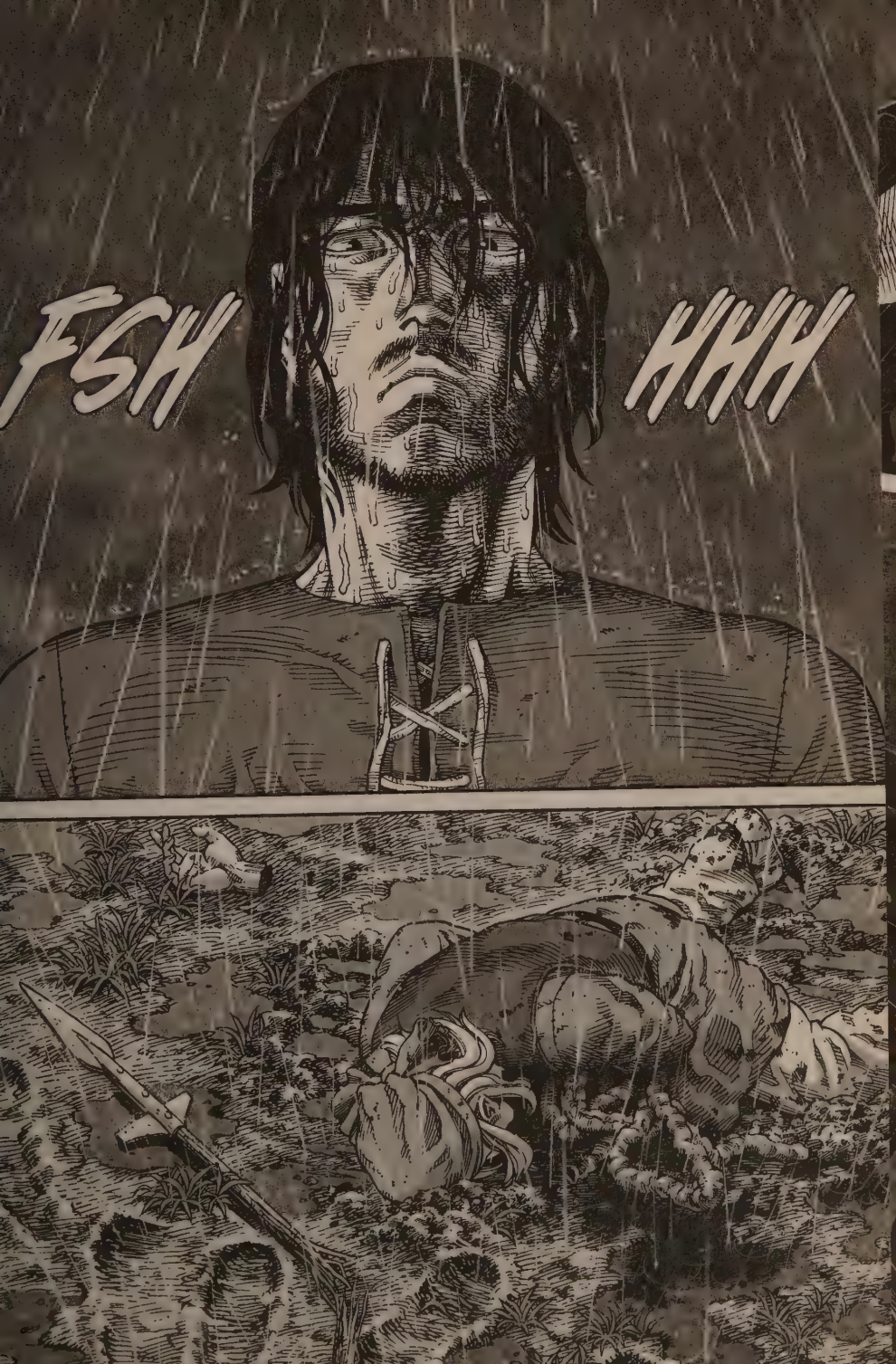
HURRY!!
HE'S READY DOWN!!
SHIT!! WE'VE GOT TROU-BLE!!
WHAM
UH...
!

CHAPTER 83: ATONEMENT

FG
H
H
H
H
H
DSSHH...


ALL FOUR ARE DEAD.
I'M SORRY, SNAKE...




FSH
HHH

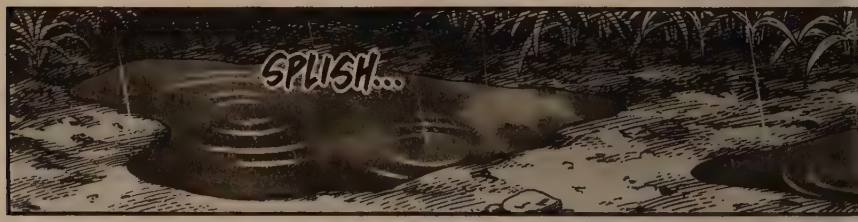
WOUNDS ON TOP OF WOUNDS ...
THERE WERE NO HORSES LEFT IN THE FORTRESS HERE.
LOOKS DEEP.
AYE.
WE'RE GOING TO FIND HIM AND FINISH HIM OFF, HERE ON THE FARM!!
HE CAN'T HAVE GONE FAR!!
LET'S TRACK HIM DOWN!!
...AND KILL HIM!!
I'LL FIND HIM...

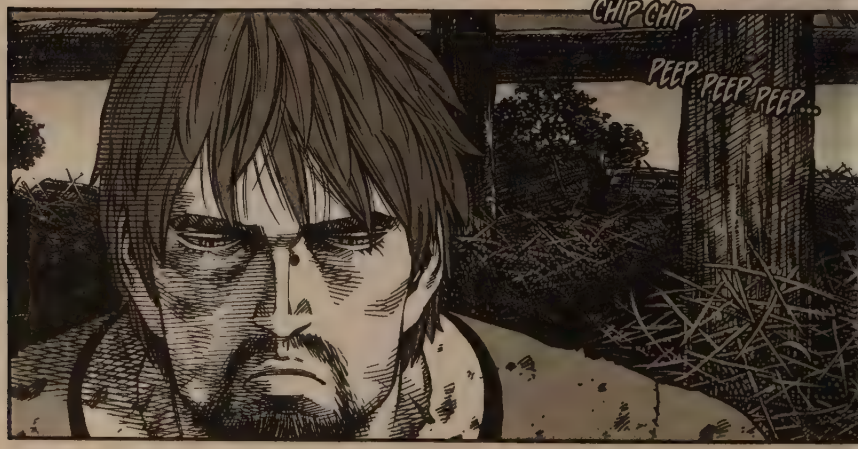
YOU IDIOTS...
AFTER ALL MY WARNINGS TO TAKE HIM SERIOUSLY...

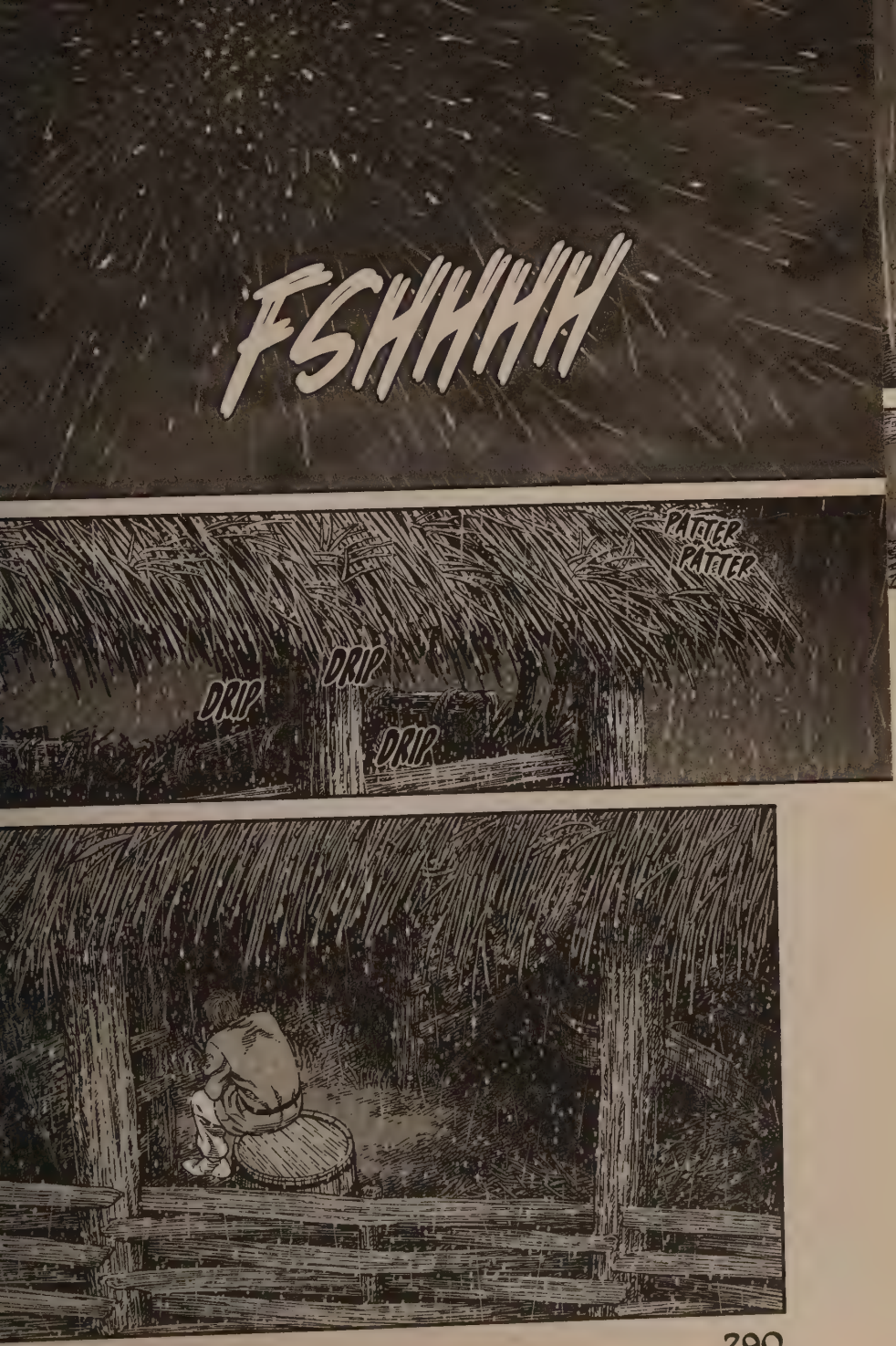
IT'S HIS SWORD.
LOOK AT THE TIP.

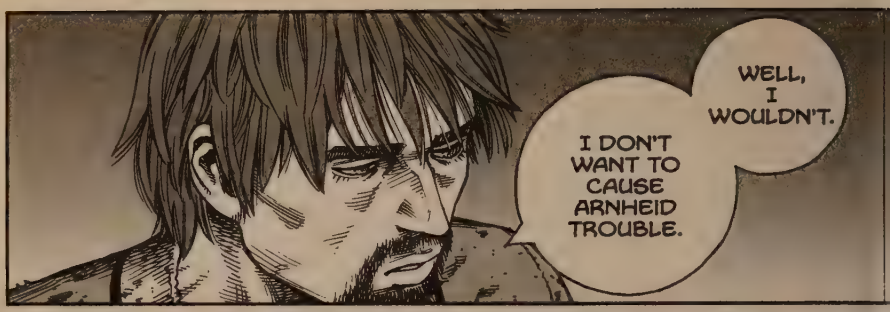
SNAKE! COME QUICK!!

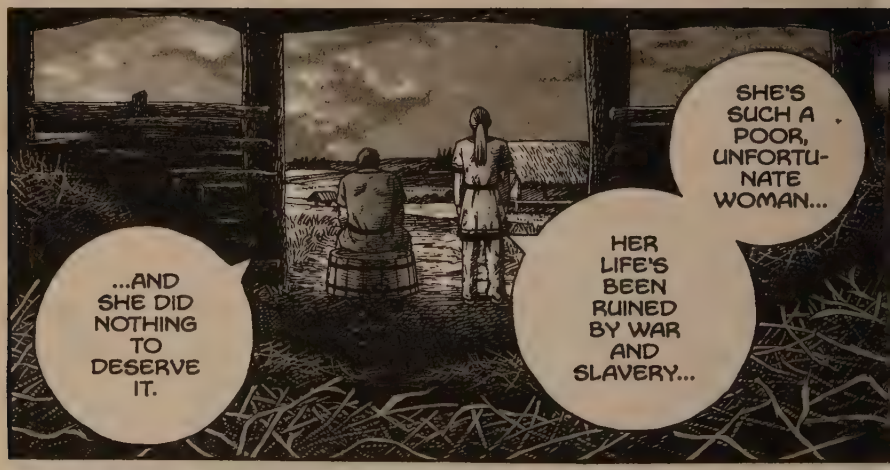
THE RAIN WASHED THE BLOOD AWAY, BUT THERE'S STILL FAT ALONG THE END.
HE STABBED SOMEONE WITH IT.


SPLISH...

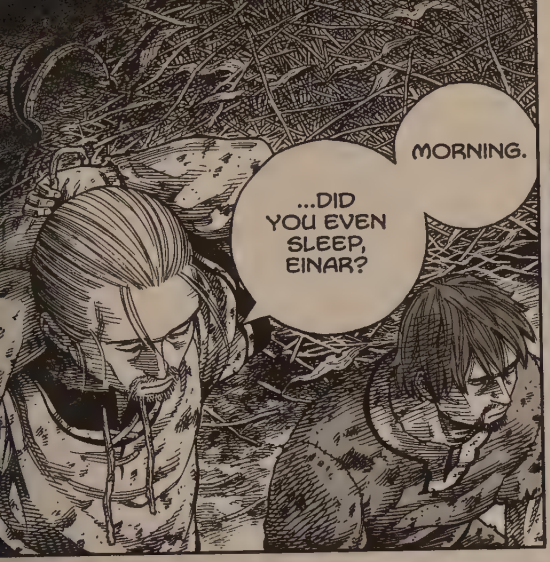

CHIP CHIP
PEEP PEEP PEEP...


FSHHHH
PATTER
PATTER
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP


I DON'T WANT TO CAUSE ARNHEID TROUBLE.
WELL, I WOULDN'T.


...AND SHE DID NOTHING TO DESERVE IT.
HER LIFE'S BEEN RUINED BY WAR AND SLAVERY...
SHE'S SUCH A POOR, UNFORTU-NATE WOMAN...

IT'S WRONG.
IF THE INNOCENT ARE SUFFERING, THEN SOMETHING'S WRONG.



I DARE-SAY YOU HAVEN'T EITHER, THORFINN.

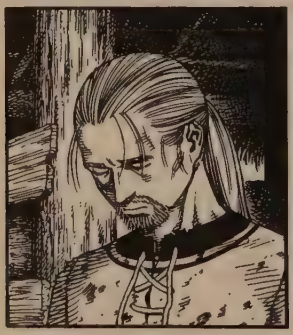
I NEVER HEARD YOU MOANING AND YELLING IN YOUR SLEEP.

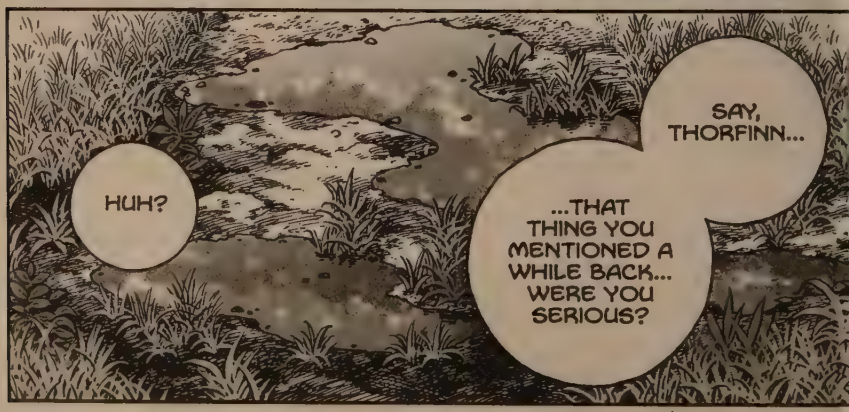
HMM ?

AHH... NO...

IN THE PAST... I NEVER GAVE A THOUGHT TO IT.

HOW COULD I DO THOSE TERRIBLE THINGS TO PEOPLE AND NEVER THINK ABOUT WHAT I WAS DOING?





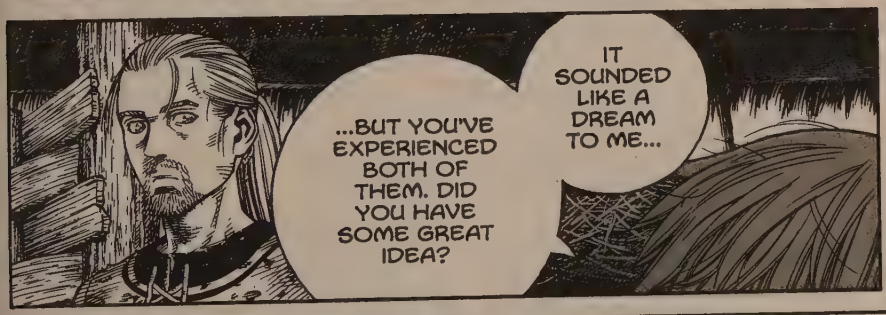
I LIVED AT WAR FOR YEARS AND YEARS...
...
...IT HURTS TO HEAR YOU SAY THAT.
I SHOULDN'T HAVE SAID THAT.
I DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO CLAIM IT "HURTS." FORGET I SAID IT.
ER, NO...
I'M SORRY.
...THANK YOU...
IT'S PATHETIC TO ADMIT... BUT I'M AFRAID OF PEOPLE LIKE HER LEARNING THE TRUTH ABOUT ME...
I DON'T THINK THAT ARNHEID KNOWS YOU USED TO BE A WARRIOR.
I NEVER SAID YOU WERE.

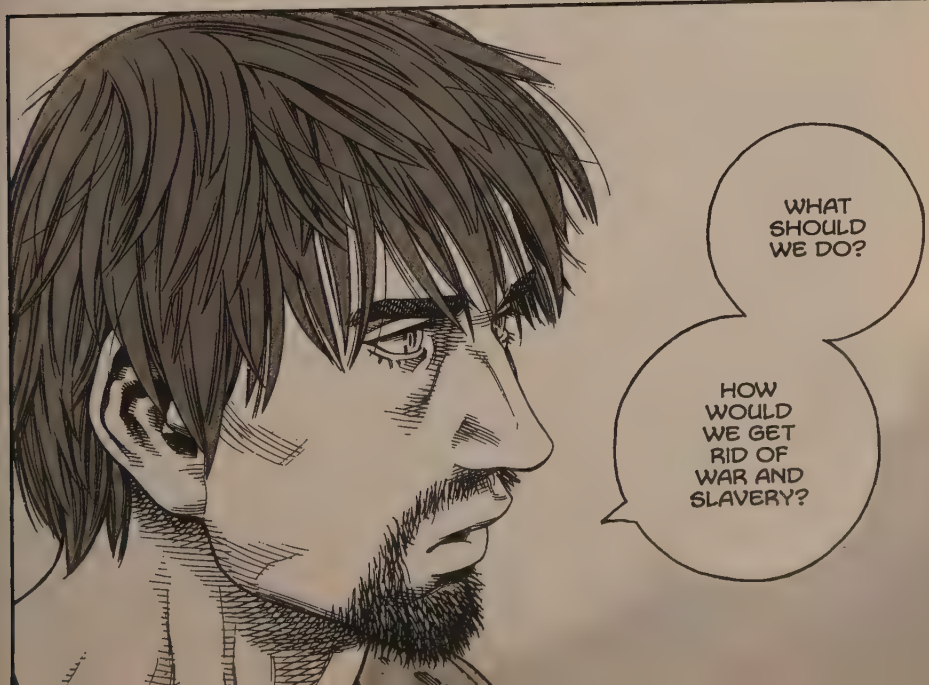
IT IS CLEAR THAT WAR CREATES MUCH SLAVERY.

THE PEOPLE ON THE LOSING SIDE BECOME SLAVES, LIKE ARNHEID.

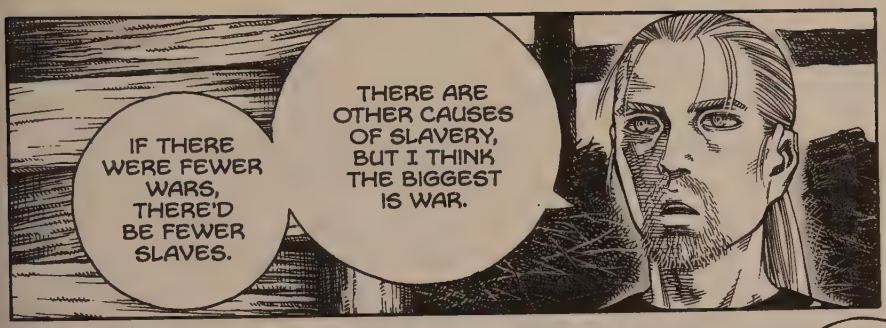
THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN WARRIORS AND SLAVERS IS A TENUOUS ONE. IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEPARATE THE TWO.

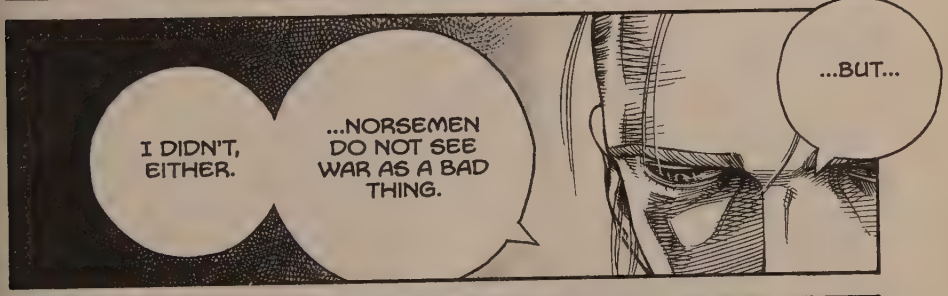
"ELIMINATING WARFARE AND SLAVERY FROM THE WORLD."
THAT'S WHAT YOU SAID.


IT SOUNDED LIKE A DREAM TO ME...
...BUT YOU'VE EXPERIENCED BOTH OF THEM. DID YOU HAVE SOME GREAT IDEA?

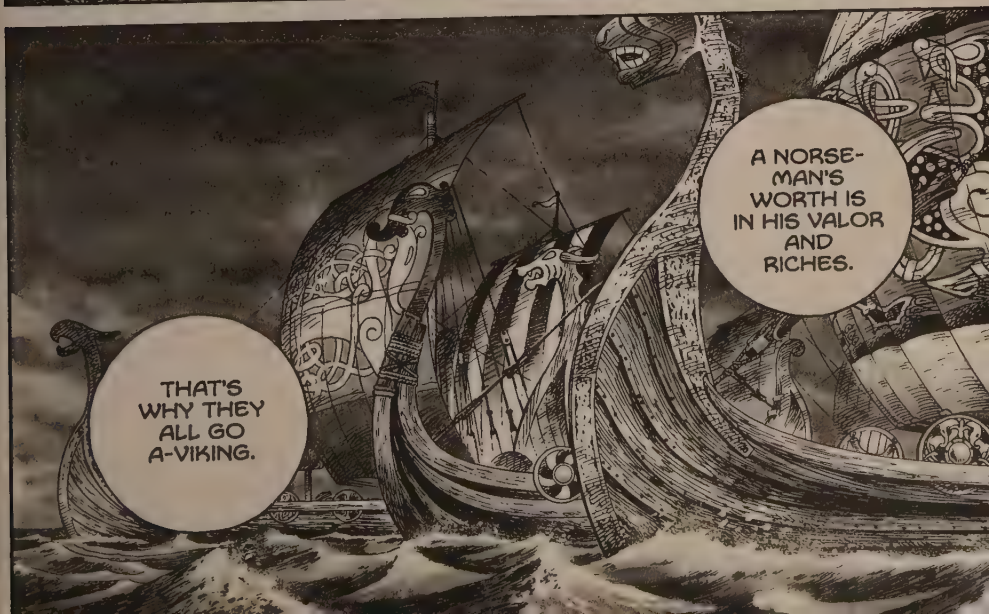

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
HOW WOULD WE GET RID OF WAR AND SLAVERY?

ALL OF A MAN'S PRIDE RESTS ON THIS.
THE MORE ENEMIES YOU KILL AND VALUABLES YOU PLUNDER, THE GREATER THE RESPECT YOU EARN.
WE NORSEMEN HAVE ALWAYS DONE THIS. IT'S ALWAYS BEEN OUR WAY OF LIFE.
SO FATHERS TEACH THEIR SONS HOW TO FIGHT, GIVE THEM WEAPONS...
...PUT THEM ON SHIPS AND SEND THEM OFF TO WAR.
IT'S HARD TO STOP DOING SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
FIGHTING IS JUST TAKEN FOR GRANTED.
IT'S LIKE TELLING SOMEONE TO STOP BREATH-ING.

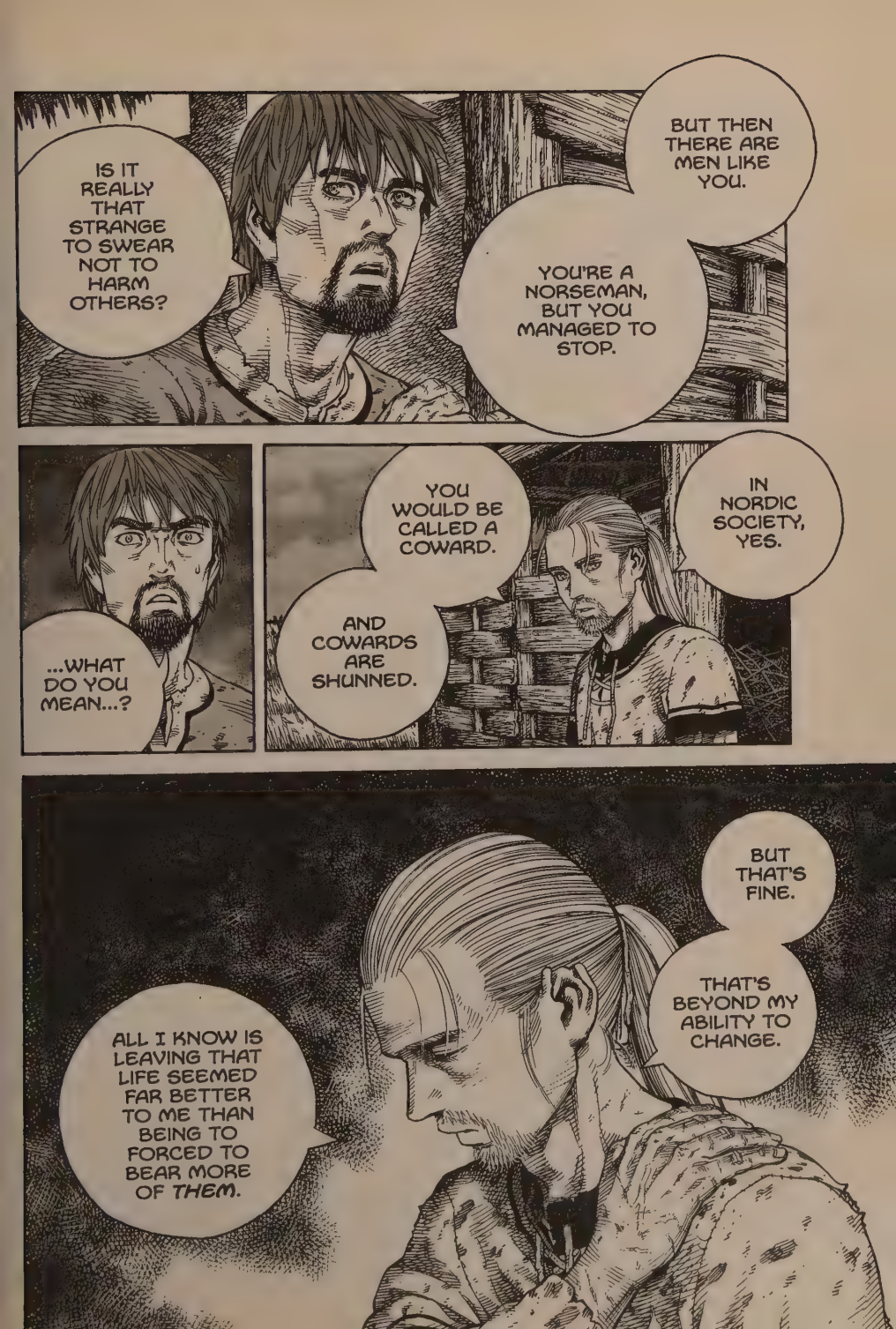

IF THERE WERE FEWER WARS, THERE'D BE FEWER SLAVES.
THERE ARE OTHER CAUSES OF SLAVERY, BUT I THINK THE BIGGEST IS WAR.


I DIDN'T, EITHER.
...NORSEMEN DO NOT SEE WAR AS A BAD THING.
...BUT...

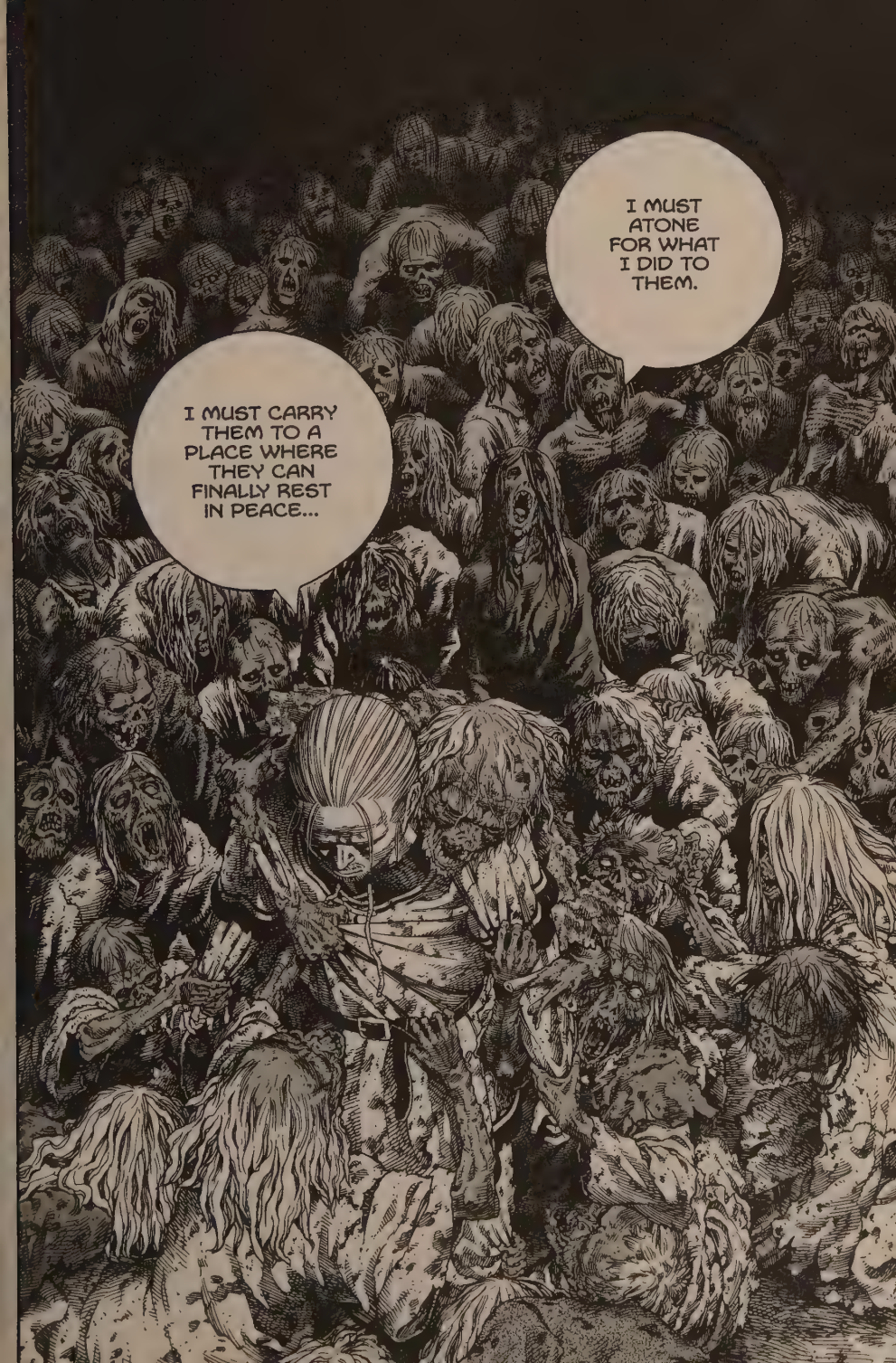
...

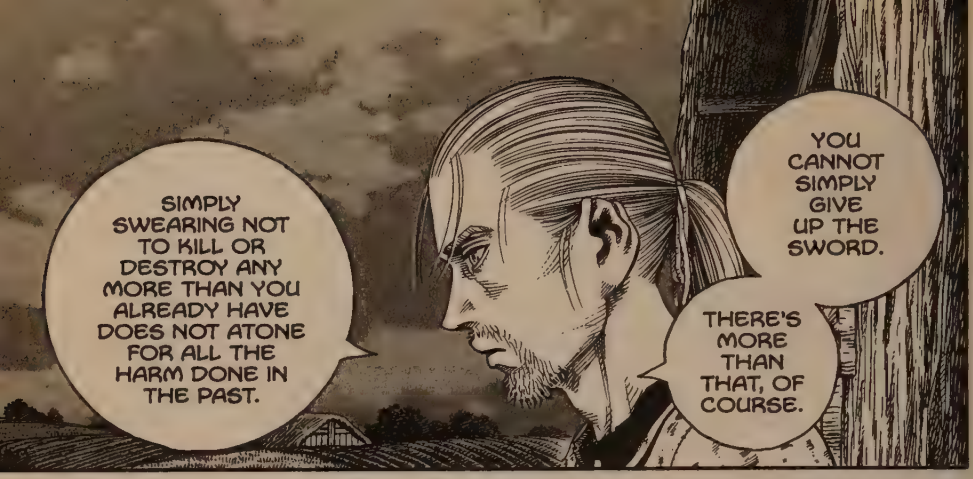

A NORSE-MAN'S WORTH IS IN HIS VALOR AND RICHES.
THAT'S WHY THEY ALL GO A-VIKING.

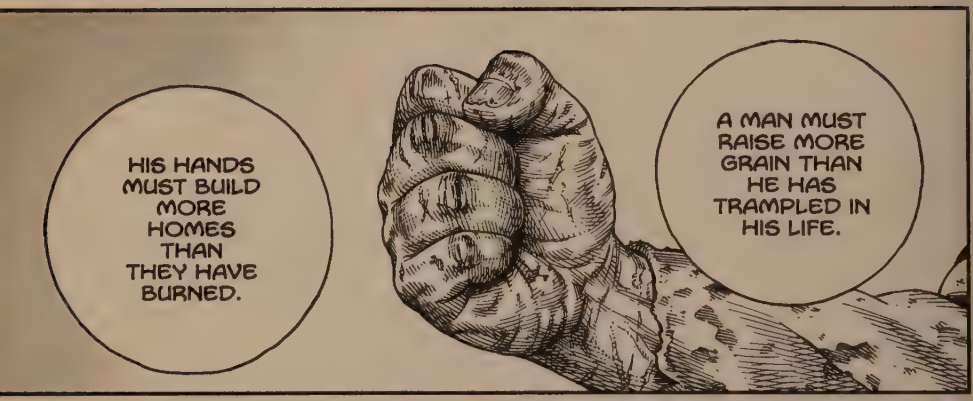
THE DEAD.
"THEM?"
OHHH...
OOOOH
HYAAAH
THE PEOPLE I KILLED...
THEIR GHOSTS APPEAR IN MY DREAMS EVERY NIGHT, CURSING ME.
URUAAAHHH
"WHY DID YOU KILL ME?"
...HOW COULD YOU KILL SO MANY FATHERS, BROTHERS AND SONS?"
"AFTER THE RAGE AND HATRED YOU FELT AT YOUR FATHER'S MURDER...

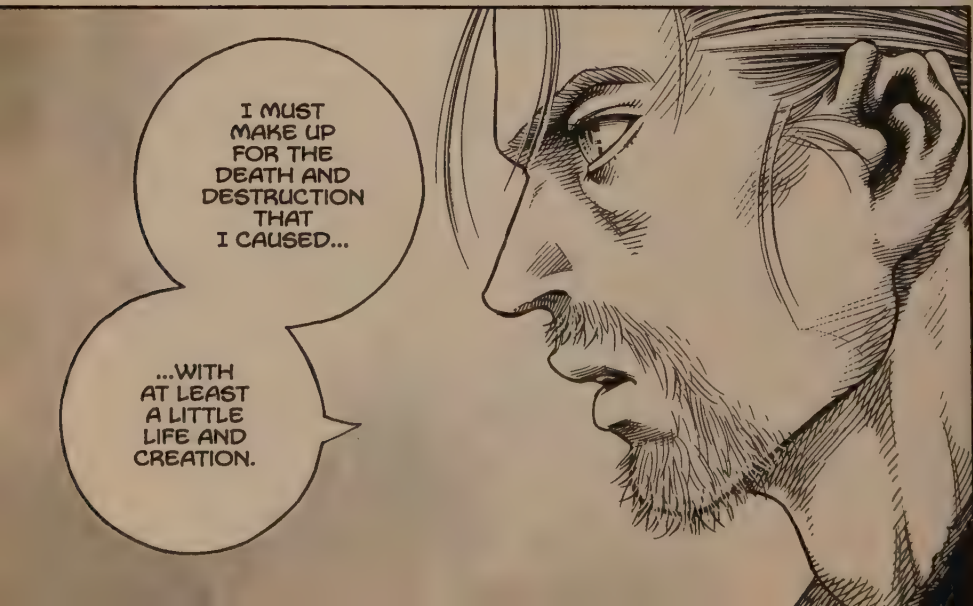

IS IT REALLY THAT STRANGE TO SWEAR NOT TO HARM OTHERS?
BUT THEN THERE ARE MEN LIKE YOU.
YOU'RE A NORSEMAN, BUT YOU MANAGED TO STOP.
...WHAT DO YOU MEAN...?
YOU WOULD BE CALLED A COWARD.
AND COWARDS ARE SHUNNED.
IN NORDIC SOCIETY, YES.
BUT THAT'S FINE.
THAT'S BEYOND MY ABILITY TO CHANGE.
ALL I KNOW IS LEAVING THAT LIFE SEEMED FAR BETTER TO ME THAN BEING TO FORCED TO BEAR MORE OF *THEM*.

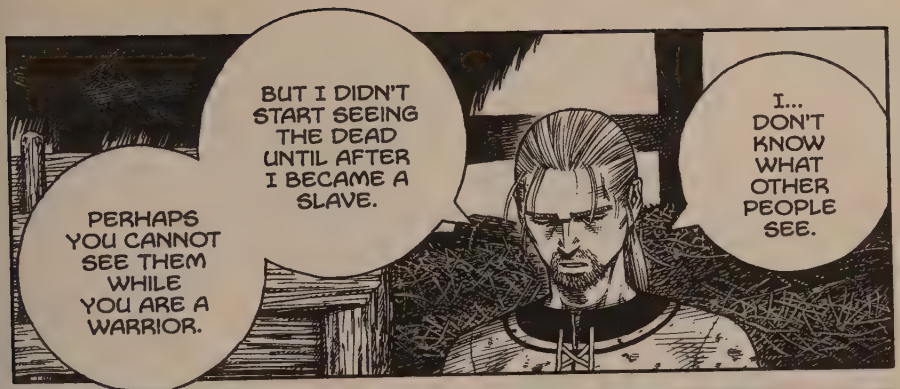
BUT I CAN'T TAKE ANY MORE.
THE BURDEN OF EVEN ONE MORE DEATH WOULD BE TOO MUCH.
AREN'T OTHER WARRIORS PLAGUED BY THE SPIRITS OF THE DEAD THEY KILLED?
...
BUT... ONLY YOU CAN SEE THE DEAD?

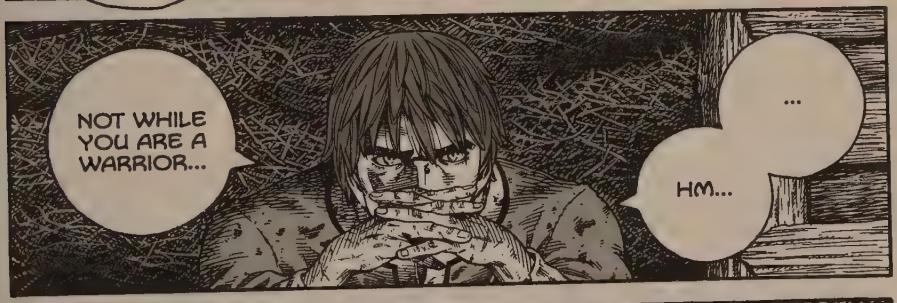

I MUST ATONE FOR WHAT I DID TO THEM.
I MUST CARRY THEM TO A PLACE WHERE THEY CAN FINALLY REST IN PEACE...


SIMPLY SWEARING NOT TO KILL OR DESTROY ANY MORE THAN YOU ALREADY HAVE DOES NOT ATONE FOR ALL THE HARM DONE IN THE PAST.
YOU CANNOT SIMPLY GIVE UP THE SWORD.
THERE'S MORE THAN THAT, OF COURSE.

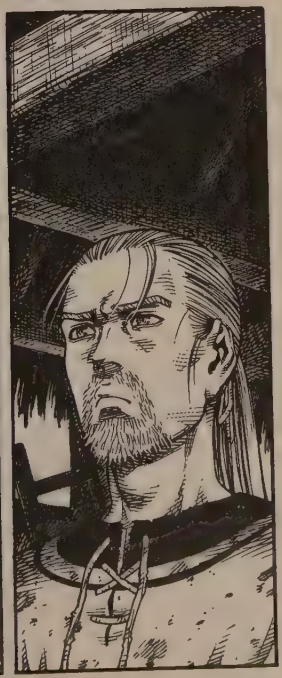

HIS HANDS MUST BUILD MORE HOMES THAN THEY HAVE BURNED.
A MAN MUST RAISE MORE GRAIN THAN HE HAS TRAMPLED IN HIS LIFE.

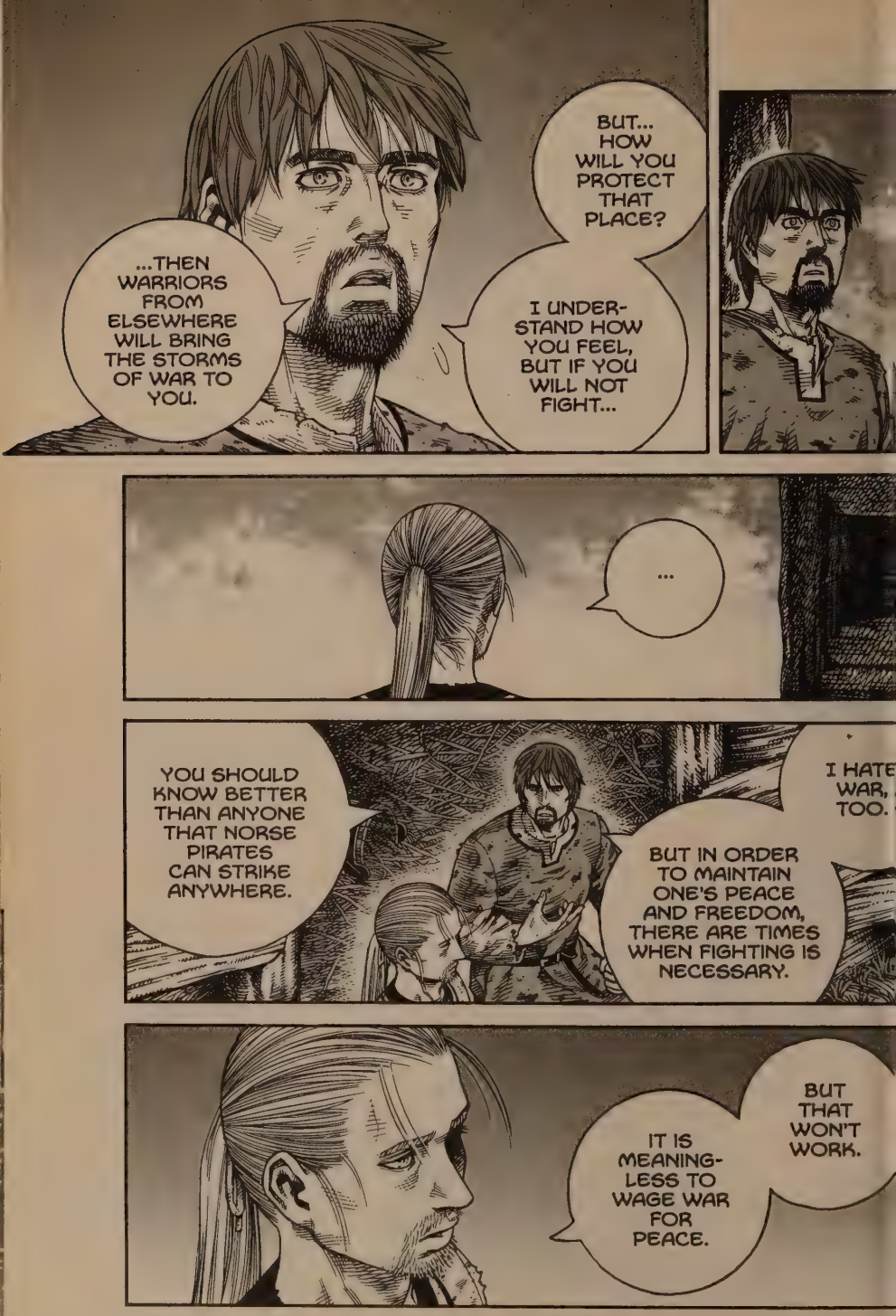

I MUST MAKE UP FOR THE DEATH AND DESTRUCTION THAT I CAUSED...
...WITH AT LEAST A LITTLE LIFE AND CREATION.

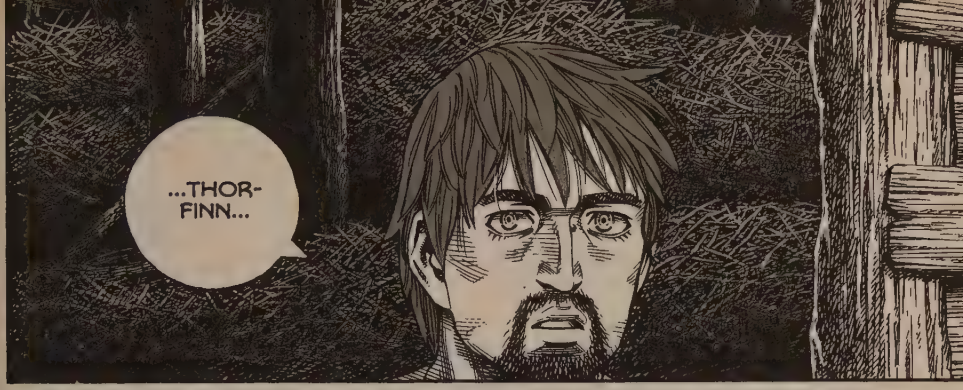

PERHAPS YOU CANNOT SEE THEM WHILE YOU ARE A WARRIOR.
BUT I DIDN'T START SEEING THE DEAD UNTIL AFTER I BECAME A SLAVE.
I... DON'T KNOW WHAT OTHER PEOPLE SEE.

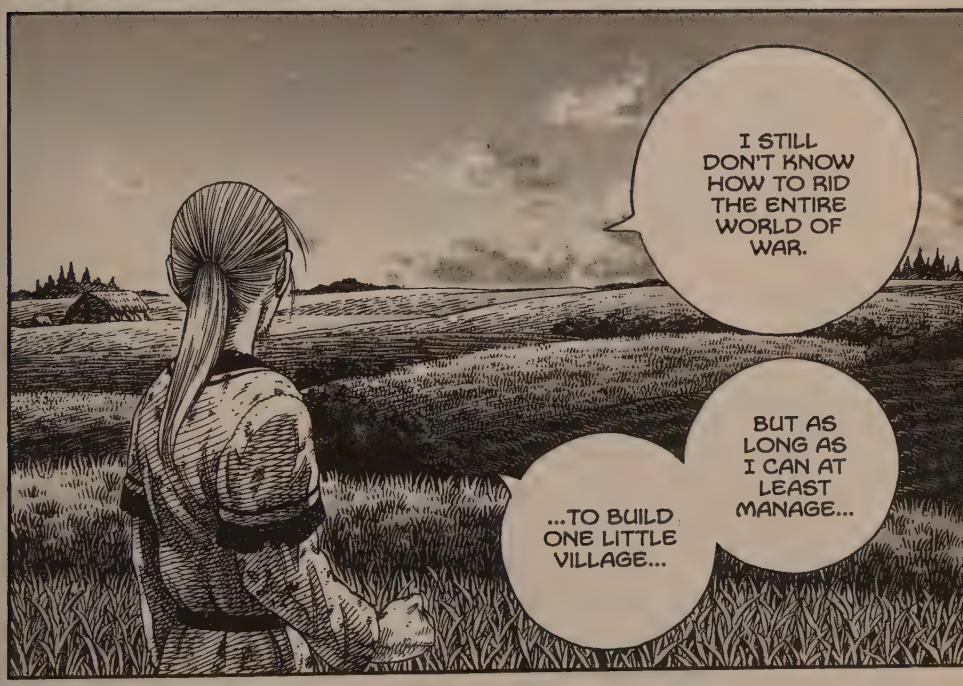

NOT WHILE YOU ARE A WARRIOR...
...
HM...

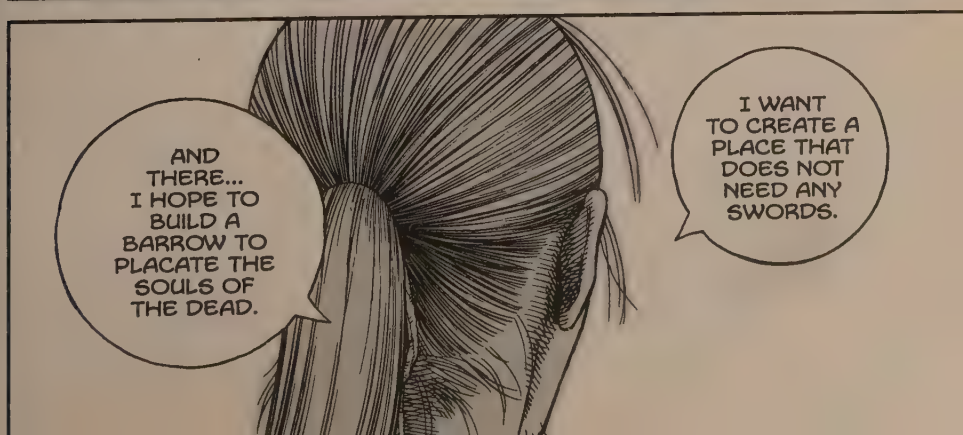
I'VE SPENT ALL THIS TIME THINKING...
WHAT CAN I DO TO EARN THEIR FORGIVE-NESS...?




...THEN WARRIORS FROM ELSEWHERE WILL BRING THE STORMS OF WAR TO YOU.
BUT... HOW WILL YOU PROTECT THAT PLACE?
I UNDER-STAND HOW YOU FEEL, BUT IF YOU WILL NOT FIGHT...
...
YOU SHOULD KNOW BETTER THAN ANYONE THAT NORSE PIRATES CAN STRIKE ANYWHERE.
I HATE WAR, TOO.
BUT IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN ONE'S PEACE AND FREEDOM, THERE ARE TIMES WHEN FIGHTING IS NECESSARY.
IT IS MEANING-LESS TO WAGE WAR FOR PEACE.
BUT THAT WON'T WORK.

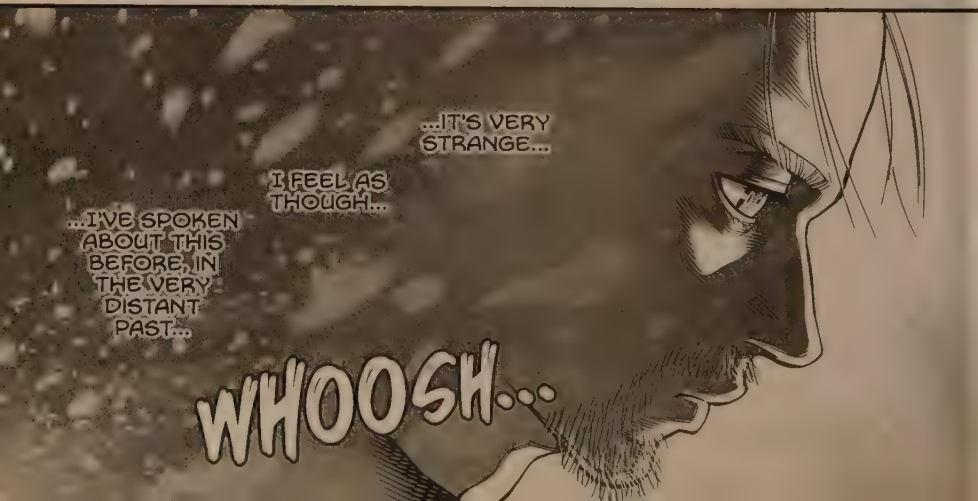

...THOR-FINN...

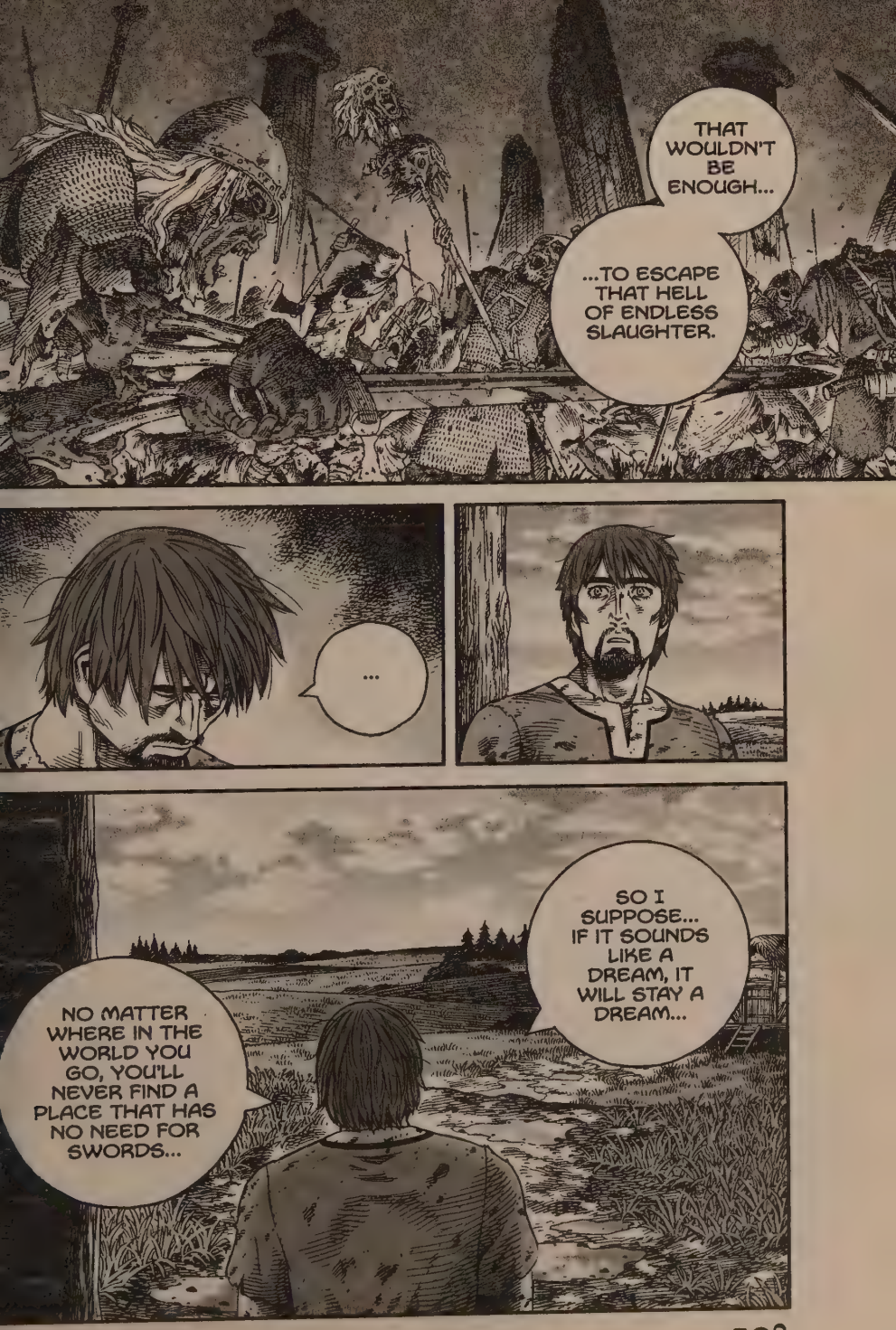

I STILL DON'T KNOW HOW TO RID THE ENTIRE WORLD OF WAR.
BUT AS LONG AS I CAN AT LEAST MANAGE...
...TO BUILD ONE LITTLE VILLAGE...


I WANT TO CREATE A PLACE THAT DOES NOT NEED ANY SWORDS.
AND THERE... I HOPE TO BUILD A BARROW TO PLACATE THE SOULS OF THE DEAD.

A PLACE WHERE EVEN THE VIKINGS COULDN'T FIND YOU...
UNLESS... YOU WENT SOME-WHERE...
...PAST THE ENDS OF THE EARTH...

A PLACE... FOR ALL OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN SHUNNED BY SOCIETY...


...IT'S VERY STRANGE...
I FEEL AS THOUGH...
...I'VE SPOKEN ABOUT THIS BEFORE, IN THE VERY DISTANT PAST...
WHOOSH...


THAT WOULDN'T BE ENOUGH...
...TO ESCAPE THAT HELL OF ENDLESS SLAUGHTER.
...
SO I SUPPOSE... IF IT SOUNDS LIKE A DREAM, IT WILL STAY A DREAM...
NO MATTER WHERE IN THE WORLD YOU GO, YOU'LL NEVER FIND A PLACE THAT HAS NO NEED FOR SWORDS...

ACROSS THE HORIZON...
A PLACE WHERE NO POWER CAN REACH.
A PLACE NO SLAVER KNOWS.
A PLACE FAR, FAR BEYOND THE HORIZON...

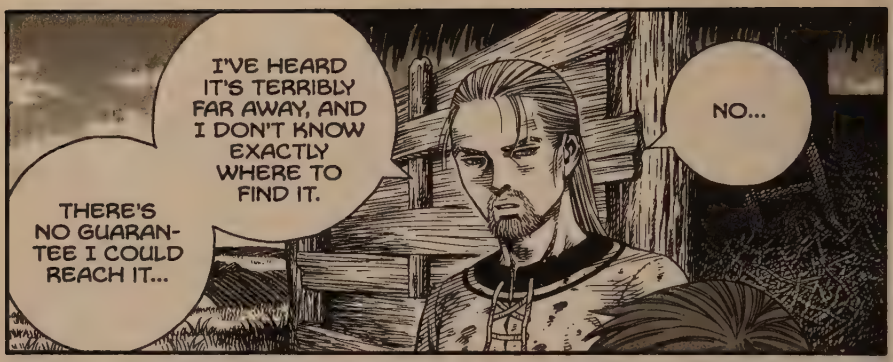
IF THERE WERE A LAND... ACROSS THE HORIZON...

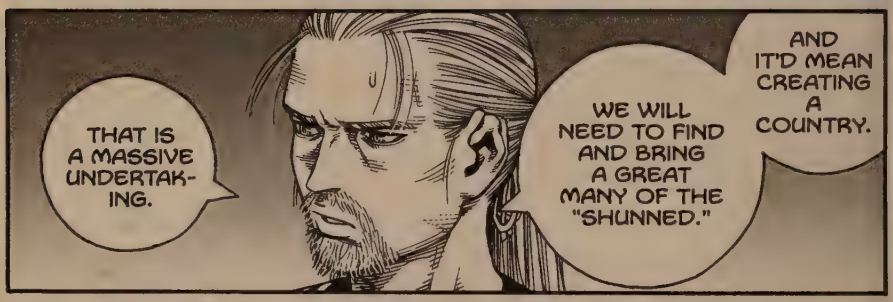
A LAND WITHOUT WAR OR SLAVERS...

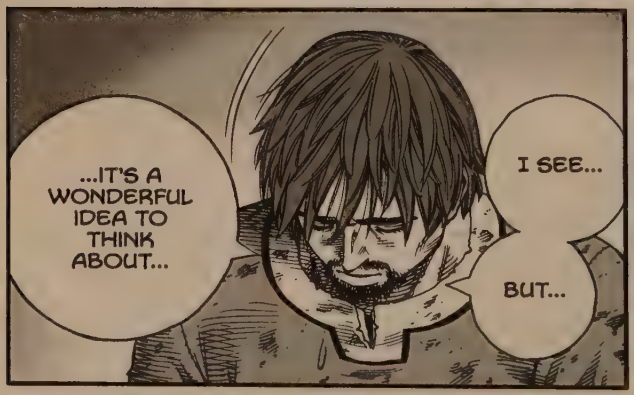
IF THERE WERE A LAND OF PEACE...

...THAT'S NOT HERE...

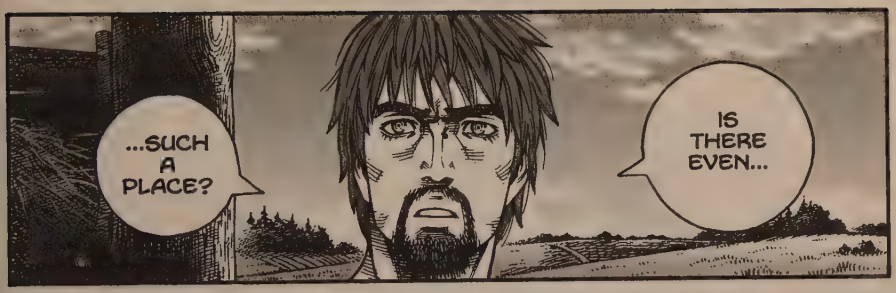
SOME-WHERE...

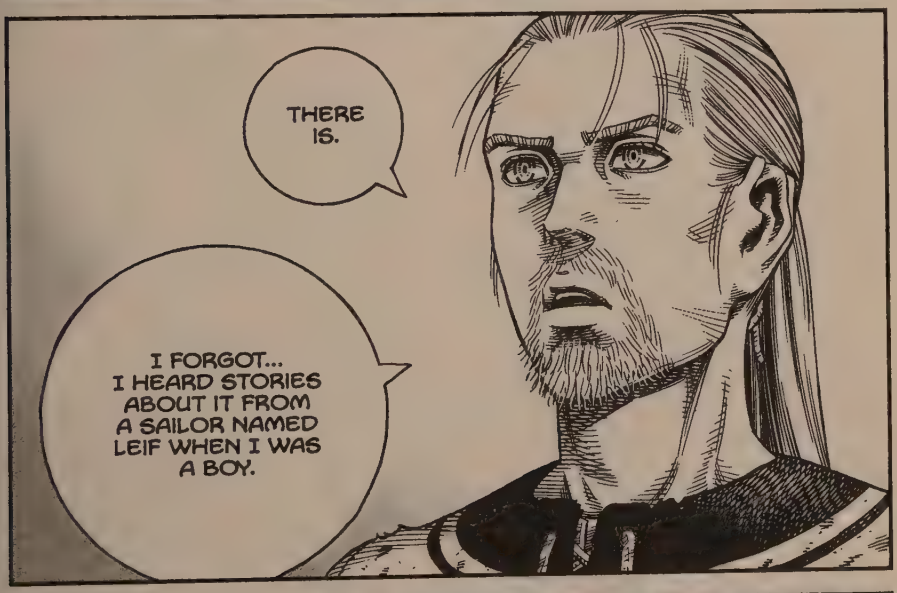

I'VE HEARD IT'S TERRIBLY FAR AWAY, AND I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHERE TO FIND IT.
NO...
THERE'S NO GUARANTEE I COULD REACH IT...


THAT IS A MASSIVE UNDERTAKING.
WE WILL NEED TO FIND AND BRING A GREAT MANY OF THE "SHUNNED."
AND IT'D MEAN CREATING A COUNTRY.

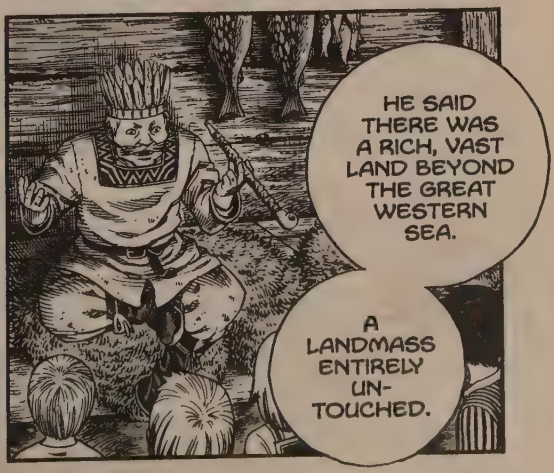

...IT'S A WONDERFUL IDEA TO THINK ABOUT...
I SEE...
BUT...

...


...SUCH A PLACE?
IS THERE EVEN...


THERE IS.
I FORGOT... I HEARD STORIES ABOUT IT FROM A SAILOR NAMED LEIF WHEN I WAS A BOY.

THAT'S INCREDIBLE! IS IT TRUE?
SO IF YOU JUST GO THERE...


HE SAID THERE WAS A RICH, VAST LAND BEYOND THE GREAT WESTERN SEA.
A LANDMASS ENTIRELY UNTOUCHED.

CAREFUL, HE'S DEADLY.

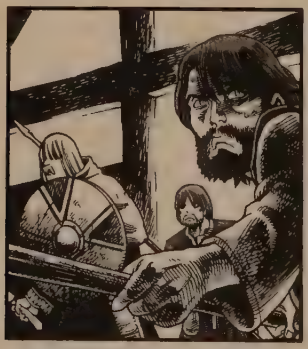
AYE.

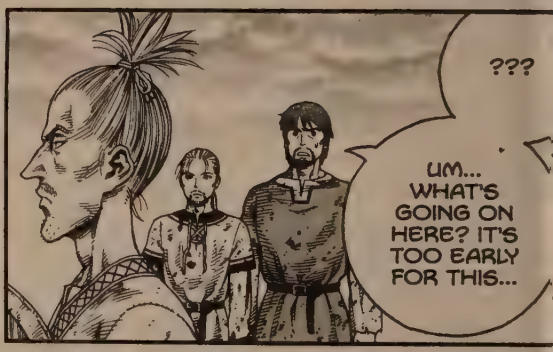
P.BBFT

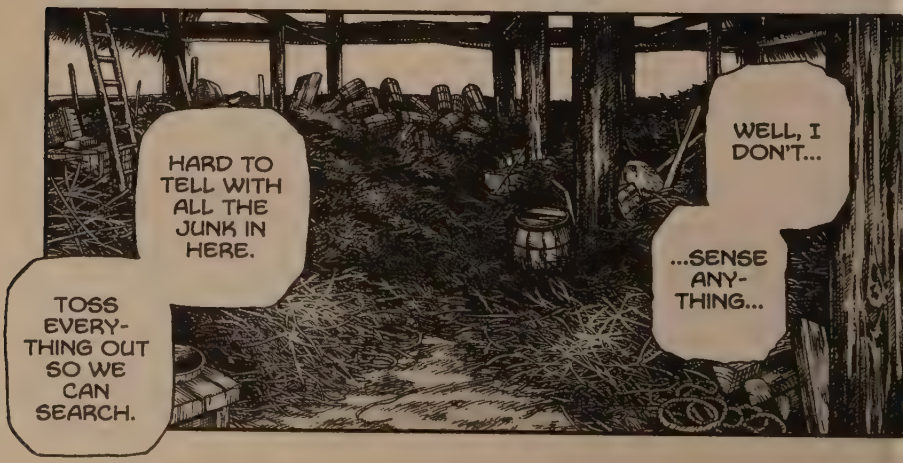
STOMP

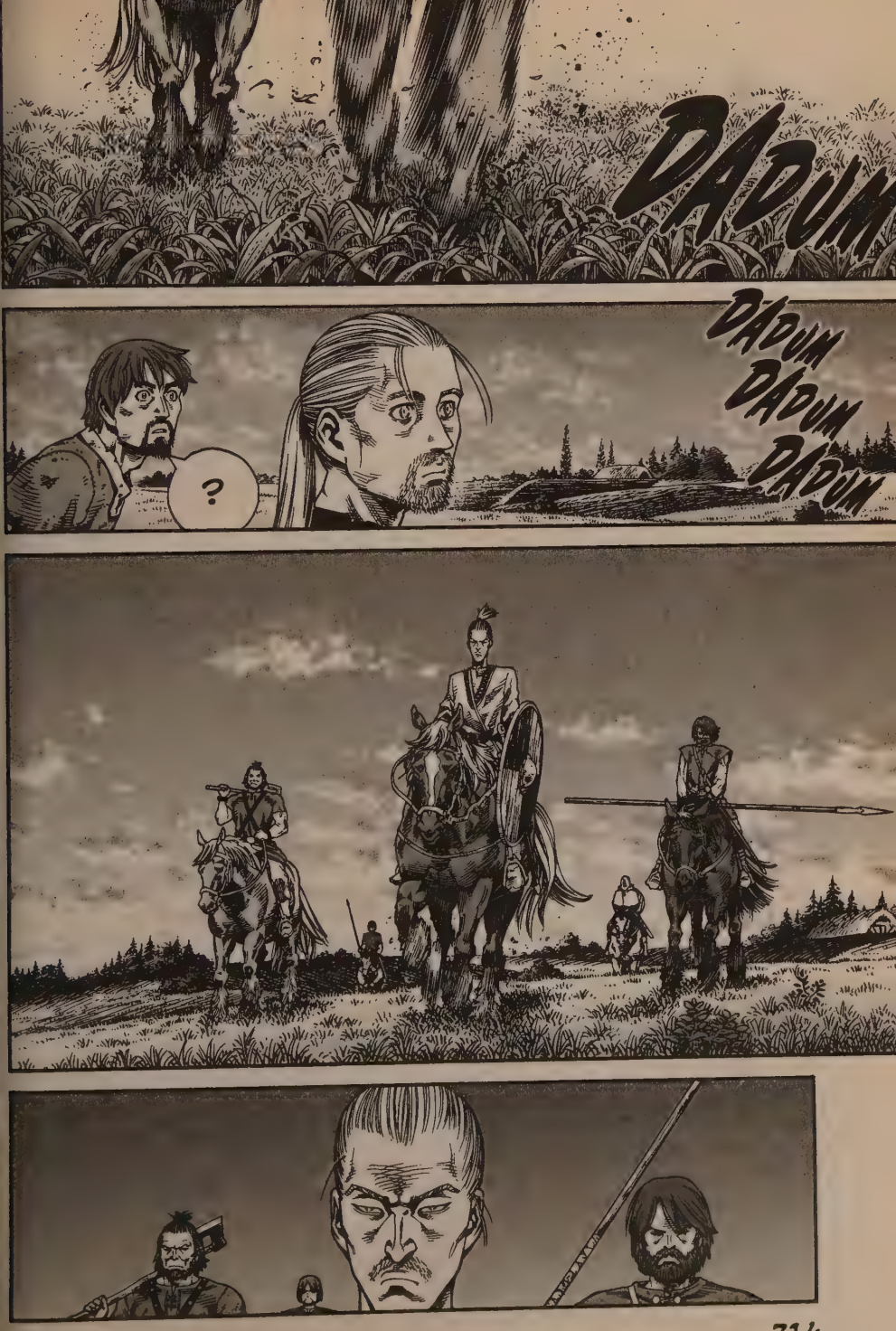
STOMP

STOMP








DADUM
DADUM
DADUM
DADUM
?

CHAPTER 84: A CONVENIENT DREAM

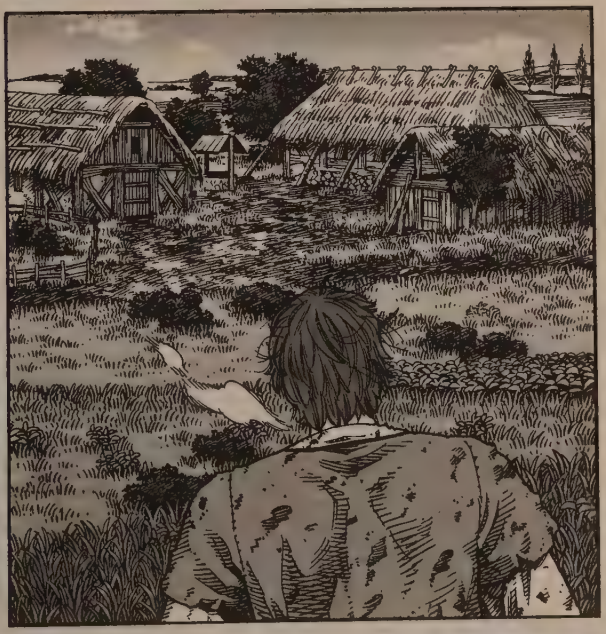
...
HE ESCAPED ...
GONK
THUD
KSHUNK
GLUNK
WHAT OTHER REASON WOULD THE GUESTS HAVE FOR RANSACKING OUR BARN?
GARDAR ESCAPED.
HUH?
...!!
ARN-HEID!

IF GARDAR'S ESCAPED-
THAT MEANS-!
HE'S GOING TO ABDUCT ARNHEID!
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
I CAN'T STOP NOW!!
I DON'T KNOW!
DRIVE GARDAR AWAY?!
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WHEN YOU GET TO HER PLACE?!
ALL I KNOW IS-
I WANT TO DO SOME-THING FOR ARNHEID TO MAKE SURE...
...SHE DOESN'T GET MORE MISERABLE THAN SHE ALREADY IS!!

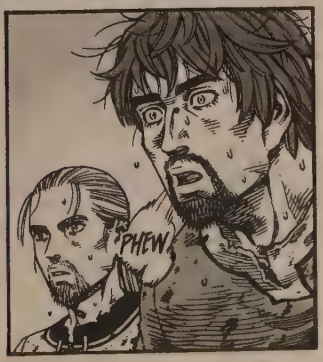
SHH
EINAR, WAIT!
STOP FOR A MO-MENT!

IT'S THOSE TWO SLAVES. WHAT WERE THEIR NAMES, AGAIN...?
NOT HIM.
...
THORFINN AND EINAR.
...NO, DON'T BOTHER.
LET THEM DO AS THEY WILL.
WHAT'S THE CALL? SHOULD WE DRIVE THEM OFF?

ZSHH

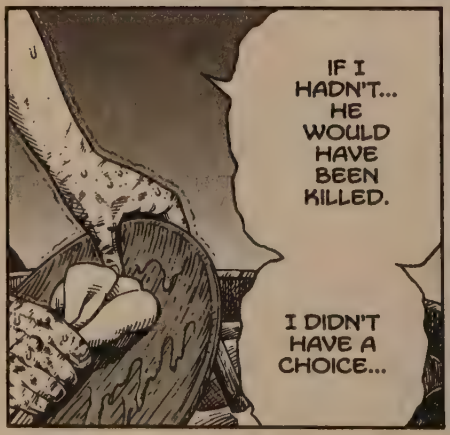


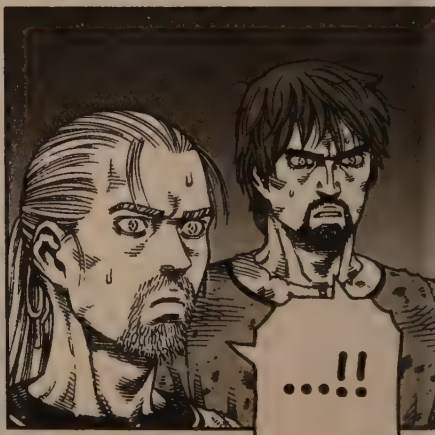
ARN-
HEID!!

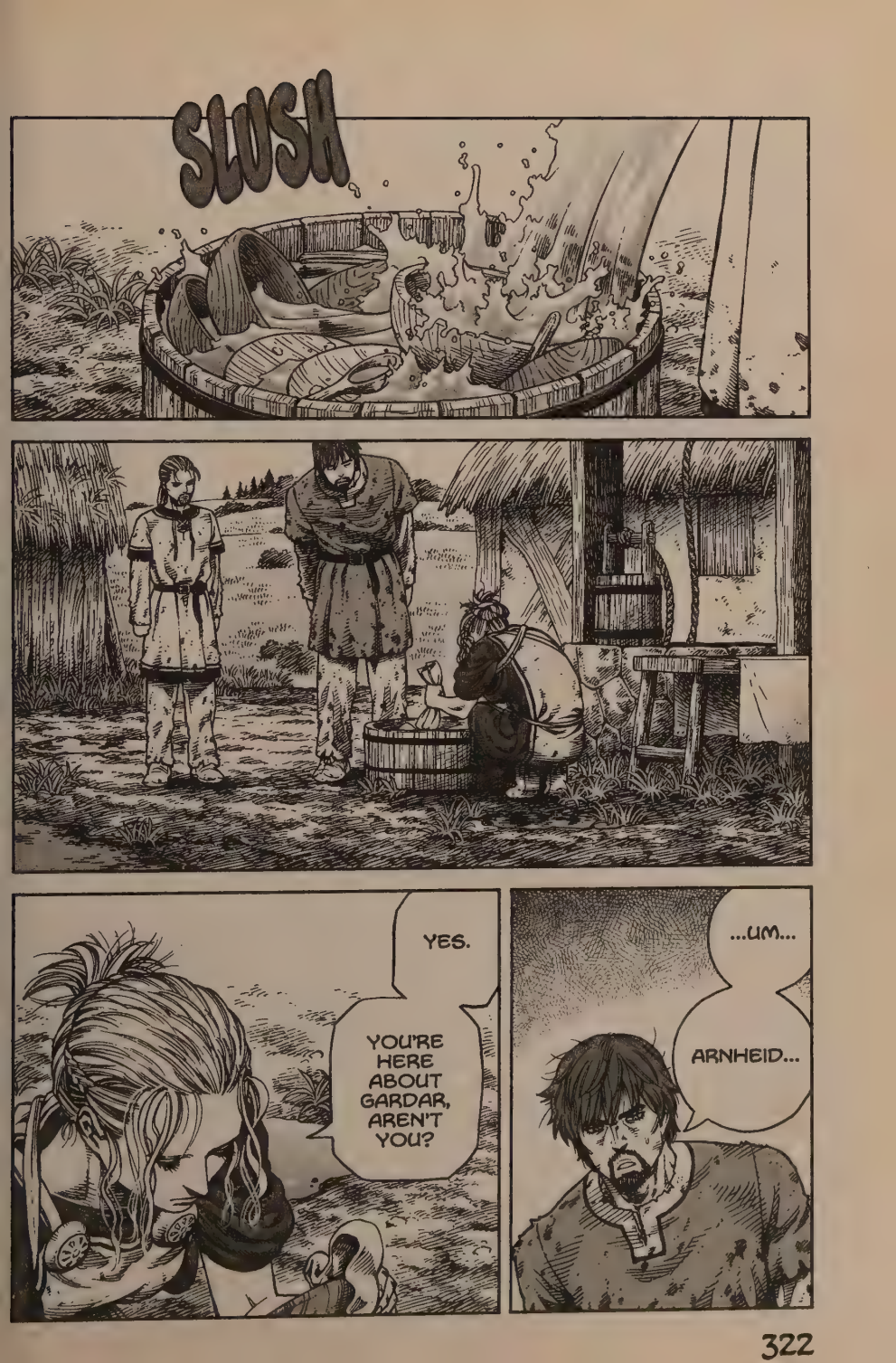

PHEW

YES...
HUH?! Y-YOU... YOU KNEW?!

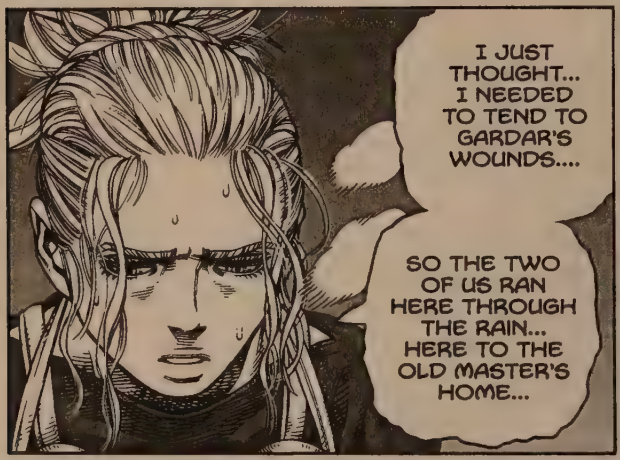
I CUT GARDAR'S ROPES...
I SET... HIM FREE.

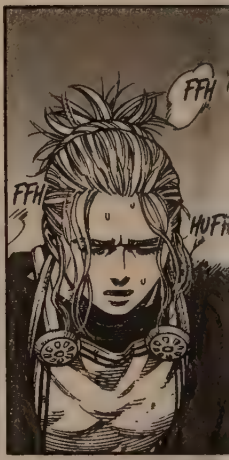

IF I HADN'T... HE WOULD HAVE BEEN KILLED.
I DIDN'T HAVE A CHOICE...

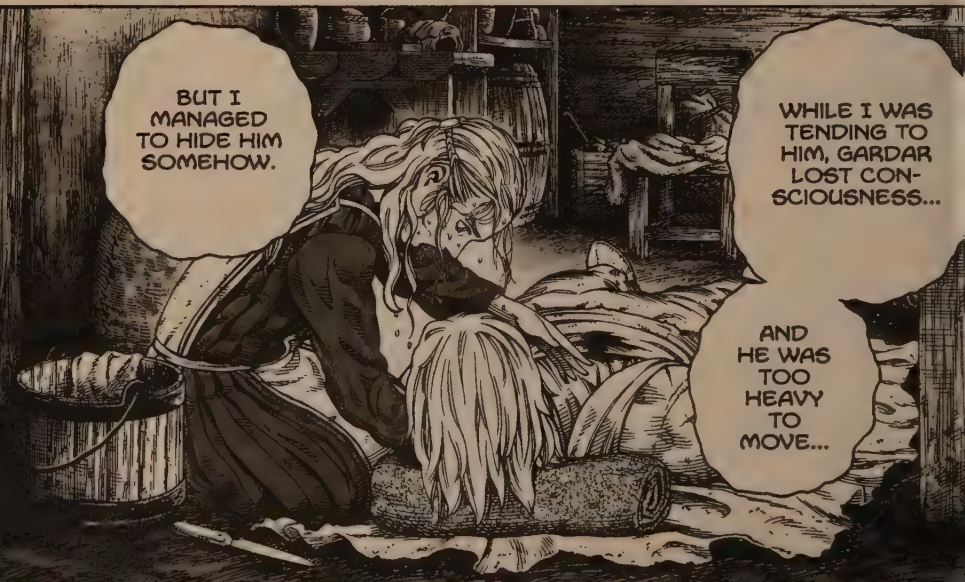

...!!

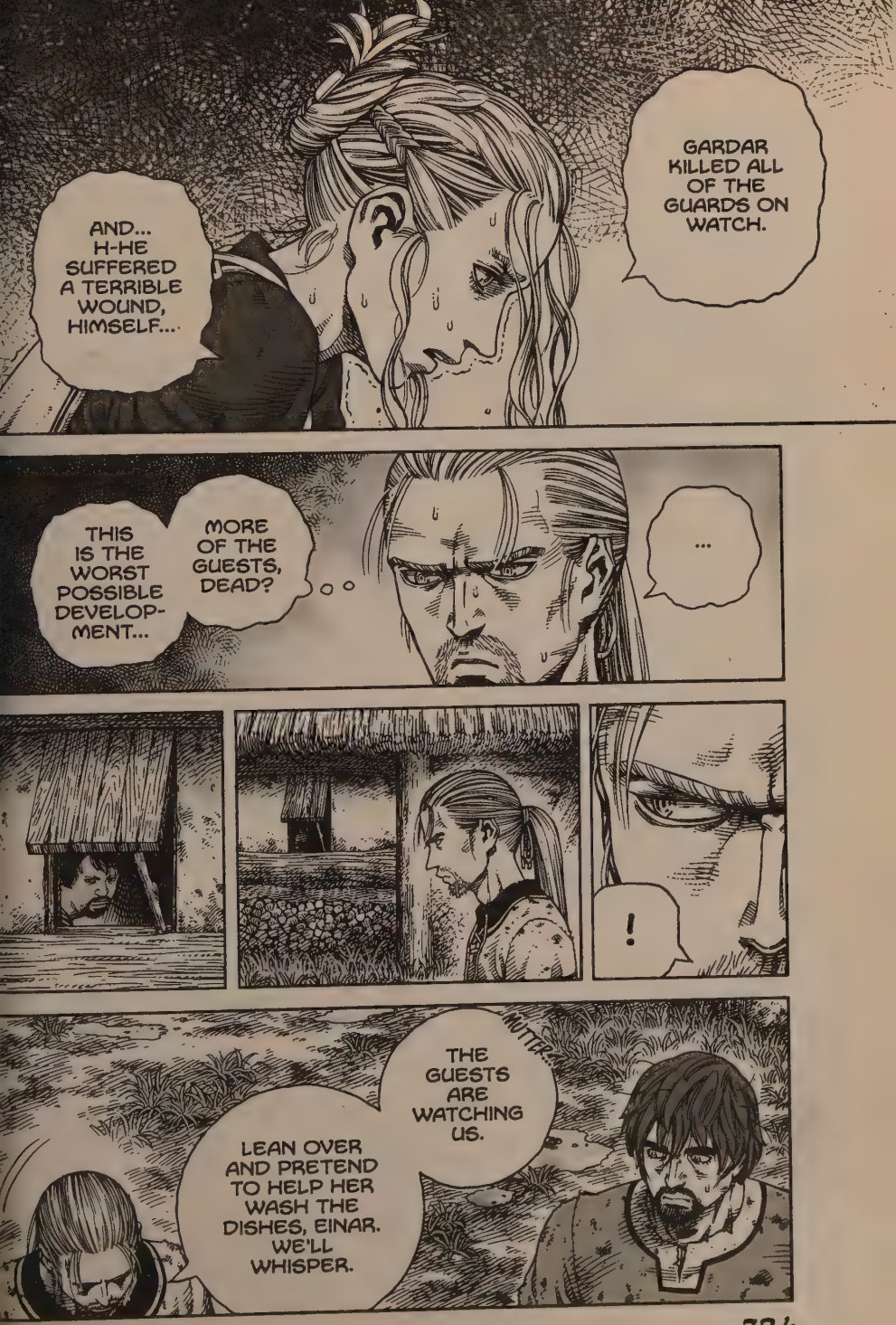

SLOSH
YES.
YOU'RE HERE ABOUT GARDAR, AREN'T YOU?
...UM...
ARNHEID...

STAY CALM...
JUST TELL US WHAT'S HAPPEN-ING.

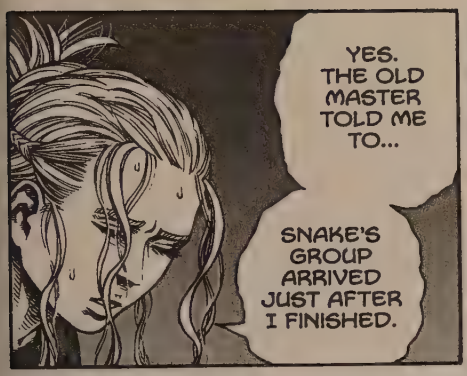

I JUST THOUGHT... I NEEDED TO TEND TO GARDAR'S WOUNDS....
SO THE TWO OF US RAN HERE THROUGH THE RAIN... HERE TO THE OLD MASTER'S HOME...

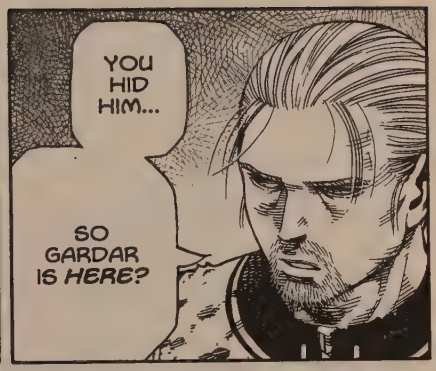

FFH
FFH
HUFF

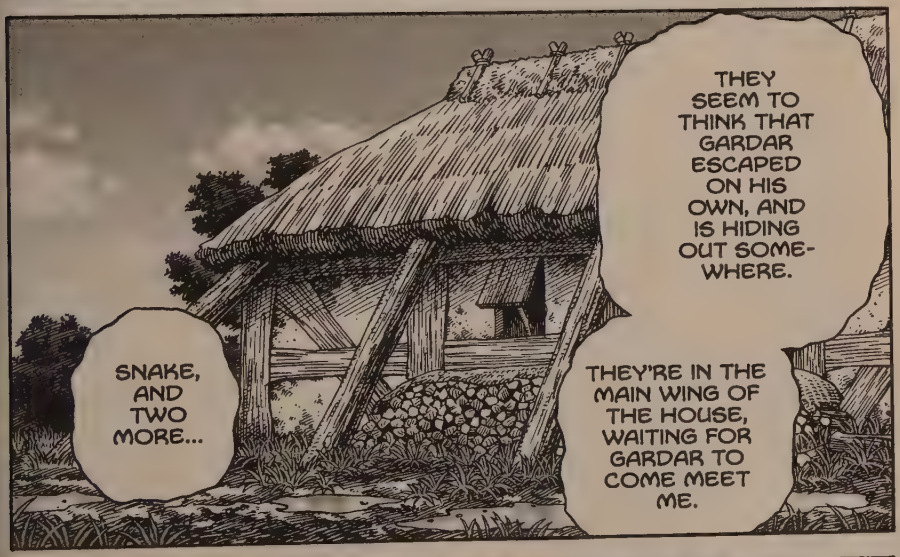

BUT I MANAGED TO HIDE HIM SOMEHOW.
WHILE I WAS TENDING TO HIM, GARDAR LOST CON-SCIOUSNESS...
AND HE WAS TOO HEAVY TO MOVE...

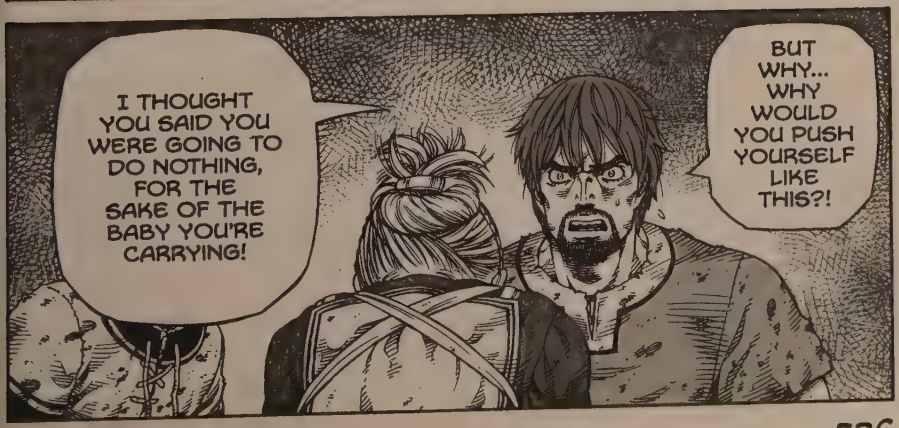

GARDAR KILLED ALL OF THE GUARDS ON WATCH.
AND... H-HE SUFFERED A TERRIBLE WOUND, HIMSELF...
...
MORE OF THE GUESTS, DEAD?
THIS IS THE WORST POSSIBLE DEVELOP-MENT...
!
MUTTER...
THE GUESTS ARE WATCHING US.
LEAN OVER AND PRETEND TO HELP HER WASH THE DISHES, EINAR. WE'LL WHISPER.

WHY DID I SLIP OUT LAST NIGHT TO SEE GARDAR...?
EVEN I... DON'T KNOW WHY I DID IT.
PERHAPS... I WAS STILL DREAMING...
THAT THERE MIGHT... BE SOME MIRACULOUS CHANCE...
THAT GARDAR AND I... AND KETIL'S CHILD WITHIN ME... MIGHT BE ABLE TO START OVER AGAIN...


YES. THE OLD MASTER TOLD ME TO...
SNAKE'S GROUP ARRIVED JUST AFTER I FINISHED.


YOU HID HIM...
SO GARDAR IS *HERE*?

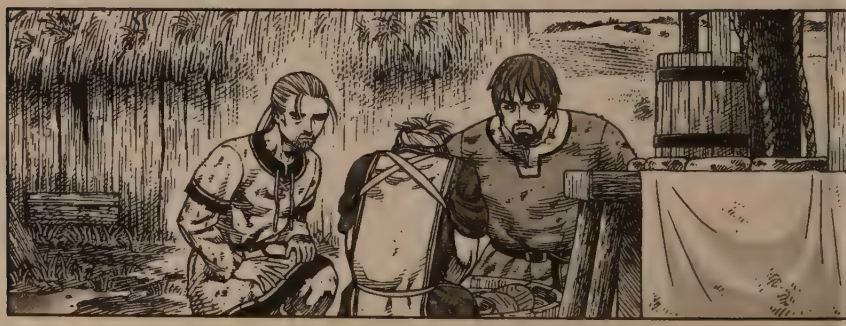

THEY SEEM TO THINK THAT GARDAR ESCAPED ON HIS OWN, AND IS HIDING OUT SOME-WHERE.
SNAKE, AND TWO MORE...
THEY'RE IN THE MAIN WING OF THE HOUSE, WAITING FOR GARDAR TO COME MEET ME.

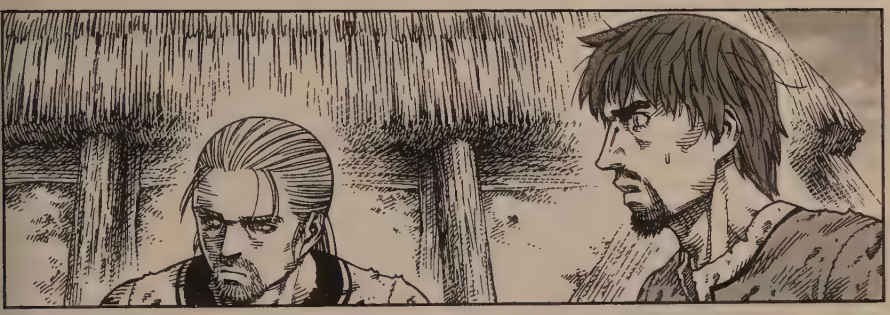

I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU WERE GOING TO DO NOTHING, FOR THE SAKE OF THE BABY YOU'RE CARRYING!
BUT WHY... WHY WOULD YOU PUSH YOURSELF LIKE THIS?!

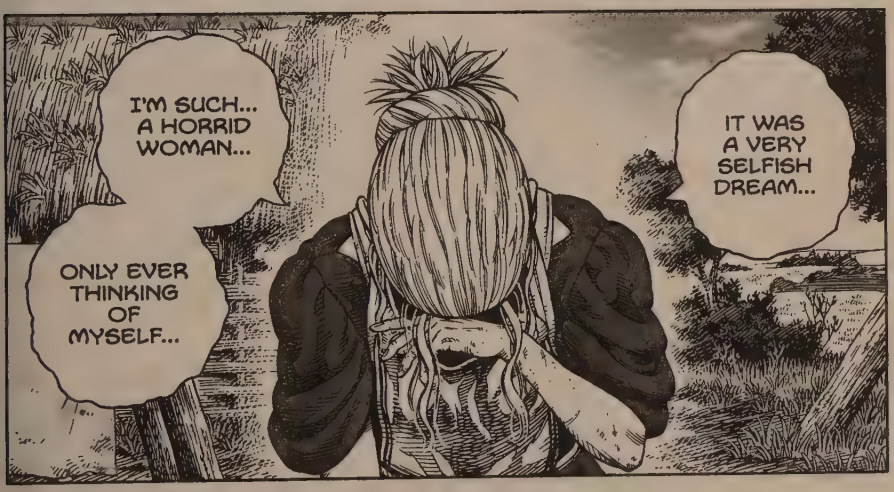
GARDAR'S ESCAPE FROM SLAVERY...

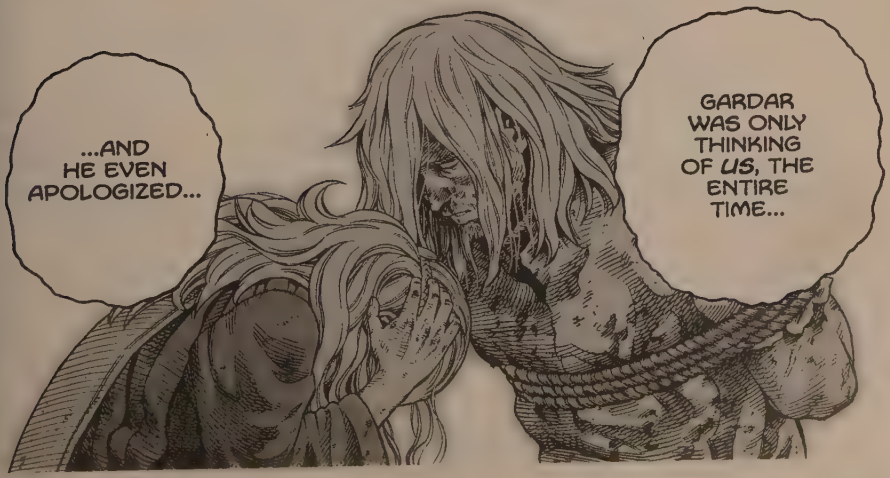
...AND THE PEOPLE HE KILLED...

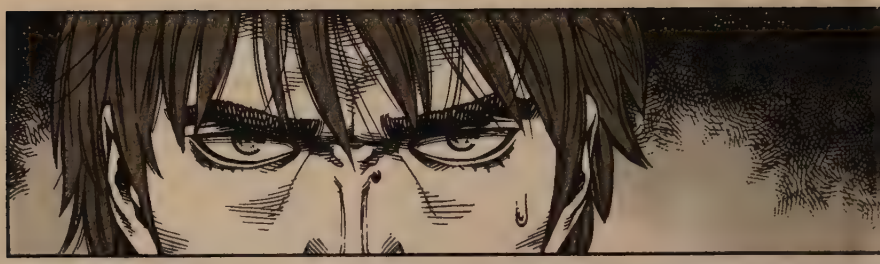
...WERE ALL FOR THE SAKE OF ME AND HJALTI!

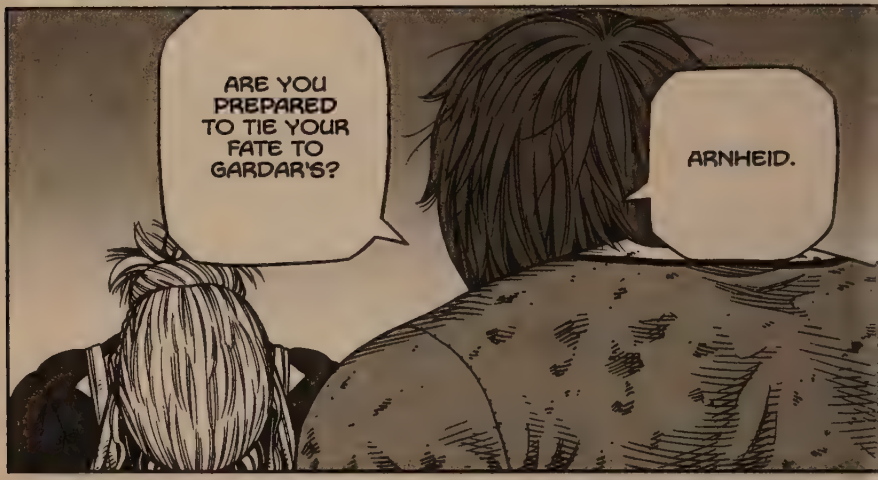


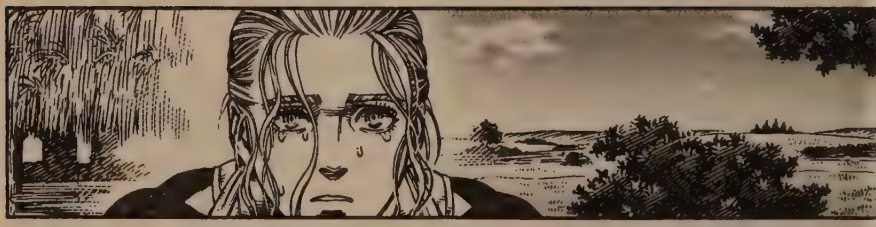


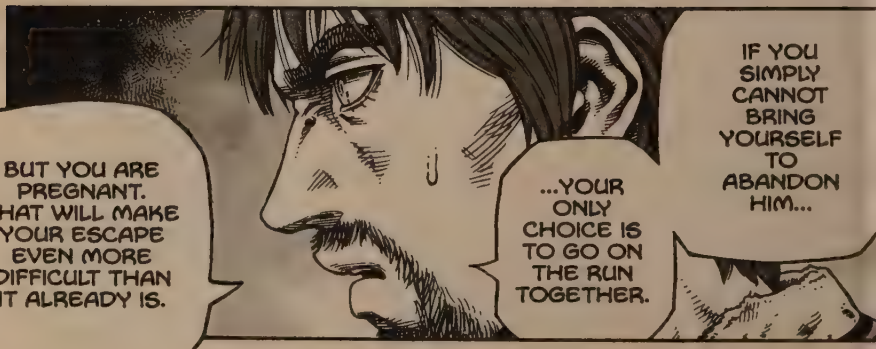

I'M SUCH... A HORRID WOMAN...
ONLY EVER THINKING OF MYSELF...
IT WAS A VERY SELFISH DREAM...

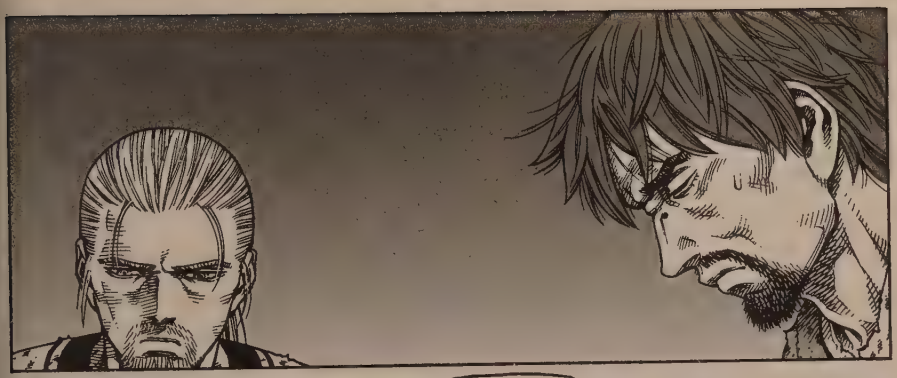

...AND HE EVEN APOLOGIZED...
GARDAR WAS ONLY THINKING OF *US*, THE ENTIRE TIME...

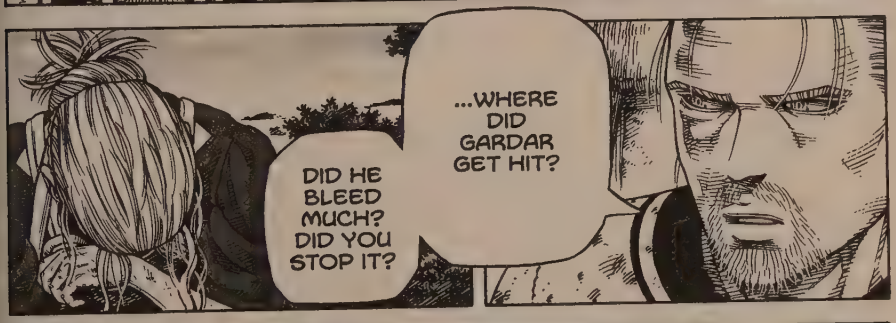


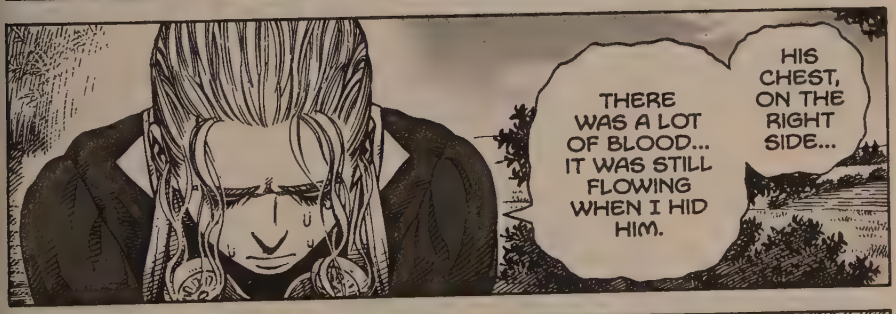

ARE YOU PREPARED TO TIE YOUR FATE TO GARDAR'S?
ARNHEID.

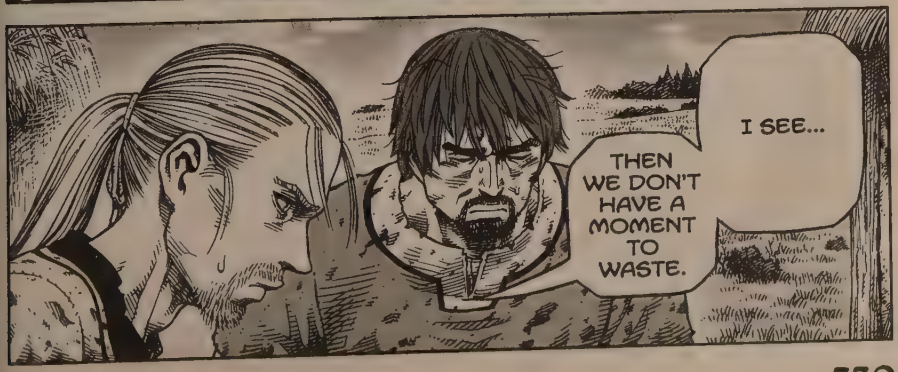



BUT YOU ARE PREGNANT. THAT WILL MAKE YOUR ESCAPE EVEN MORE DIFFICULT THAN IT ALREADY IS.
...YOUR ONLY CHOICE IS TO GO ON THE RUN TOGETHER.
IF YOU SIMPLY CANNOT BRING YOURSELF TO ABANDON HIM...

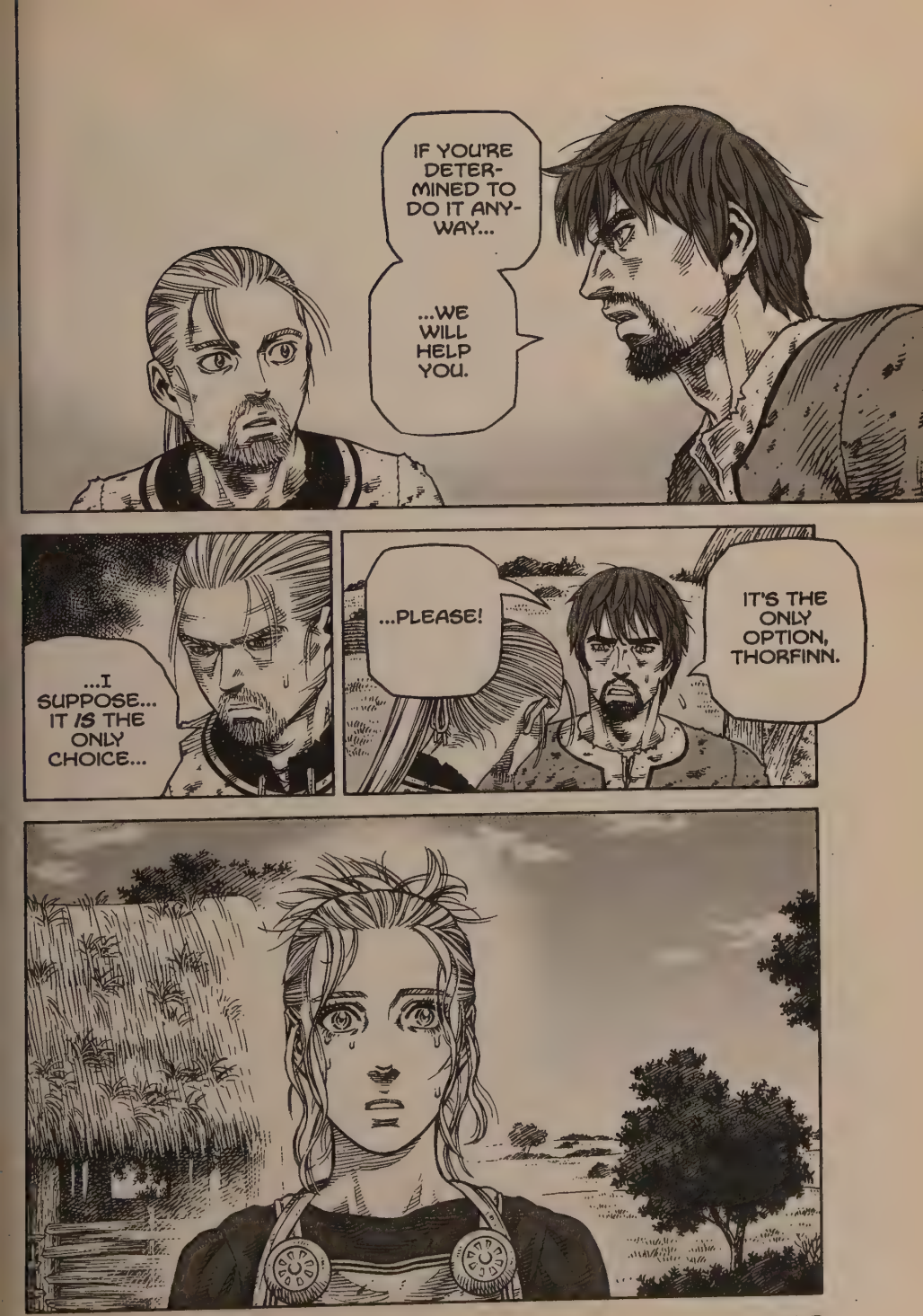


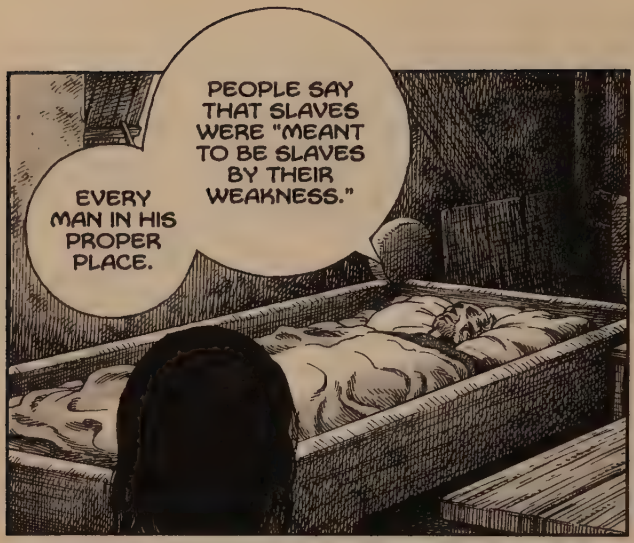

DID HE BLEED MUCH? DID YOU STOP IT?
...WHERE DID GARDAR GET HIT?

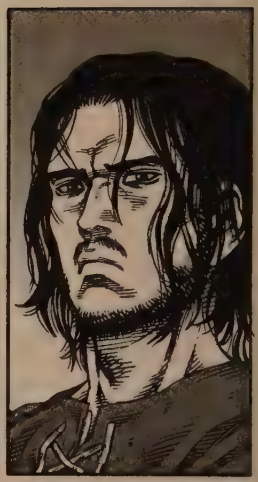

THERE WAS A LOT OF BLOOD... IT WAS STILL FLOWING WHEN I HID HIM.
HIS CHEST, ON THE RIGHT SIDE...


THEN WE DON'T HAVE A MOMENT TO WASTE.
I SEE...

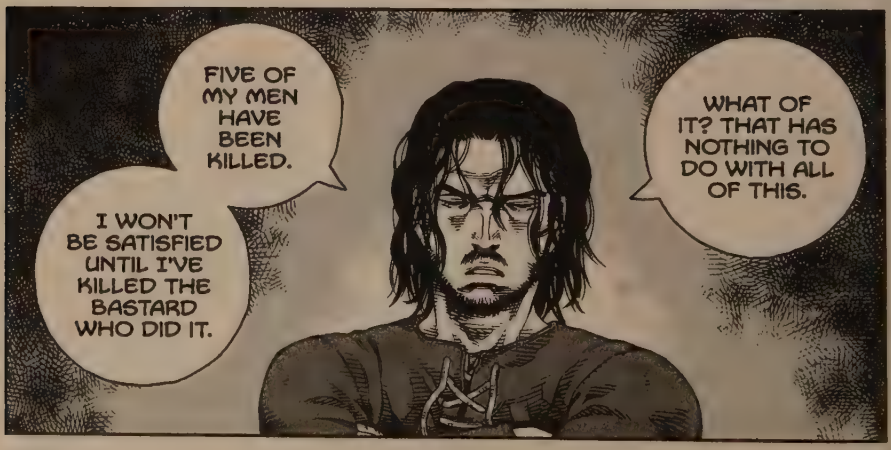
THWAK
OW!
NOD...
BEEN UP ALL NIGHT...
YES! OF COURSE, SIR!
NEXT TIME YOU TAKE YOUR EYES OFF ARNHEID, I'LL BREAK YOUR NOSE.
DON'T FALL ASLEEP.


IF YOU'RE DETERMINED TO DO IT ANYWAY...
...WE WILL HELP YOU.
...I SUPPOSE... IT IS THE ONLY CHOICE...
...PLEASE!
IT'S THE ONLY OPTION, THORFINN.

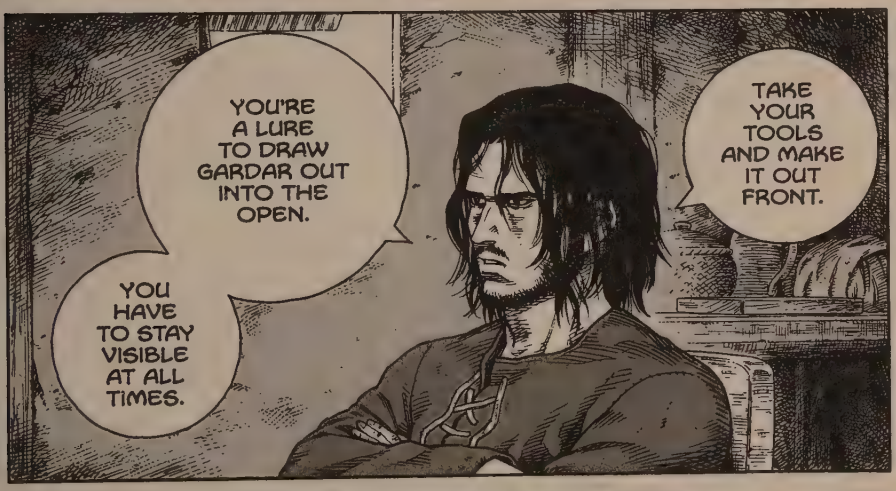

PEOPLE SAY THAT SLAVES WERE "MEANT TO BE SLAVES BY THEIR WEAKNESS."
EVERY MAN IN HIS PROPER PLACE.

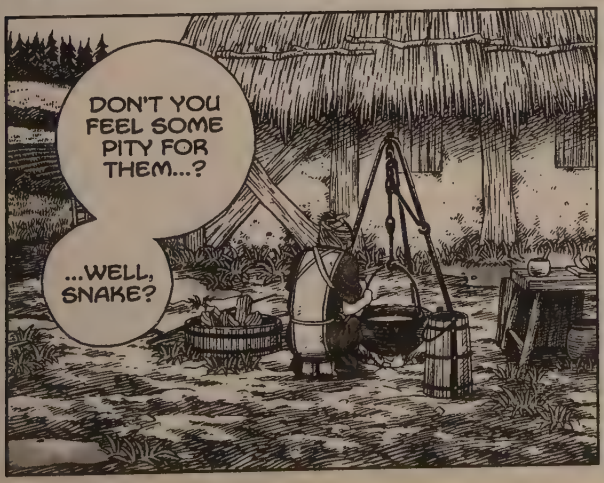


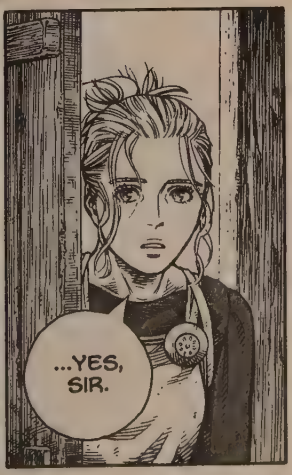
A SLAVE SIMPLY DIDN'T HAVE GOOD LUCK.
I DON'T THINK THAT WAY.
IF YOU OR I'D HAD WORSE LUCK, WE COULD HAVE BEEN SLAVES.

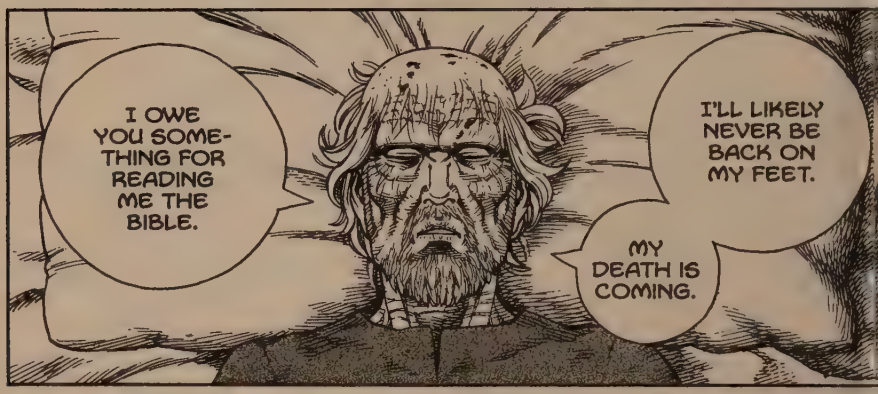

FIVE OF MY MEN HAVE BEEN KILLED.
WHAT OF IT? THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH ALL OF THIS.
I WON'T BE SATISFIED UNTIL I'VE KILLED THE BASTARD WHO DID IT.

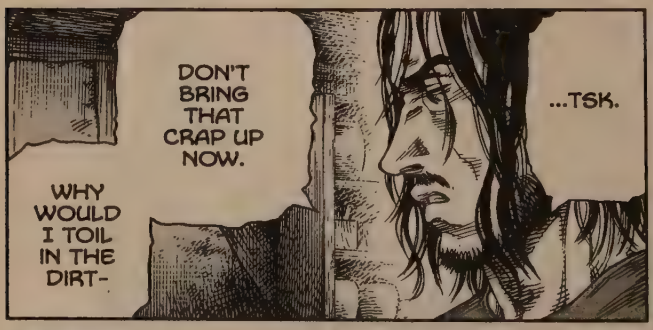
CREAK...
IT'S TIME TO PREPARE LUNCH.
PARDON ME...

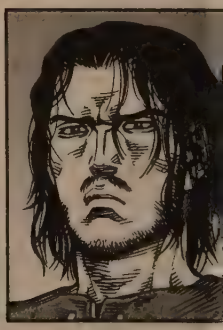

YOU'RE A LURE TO DRAW GARDAR OUT INTO THE OPEN.
YOU HAVE TO STAY VISIBLE AT ALL TIMES.
TAKE YOUR TOOLS AND MAKE IT OUT FRONT.

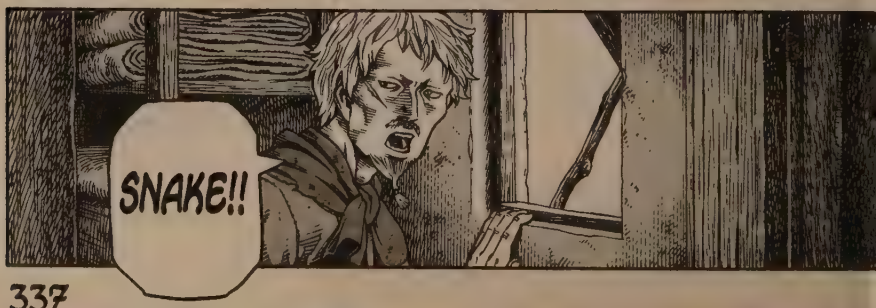

DON'T YOU FEEL SOME PITY FOR THEM...?
...WELL, SNAKE?

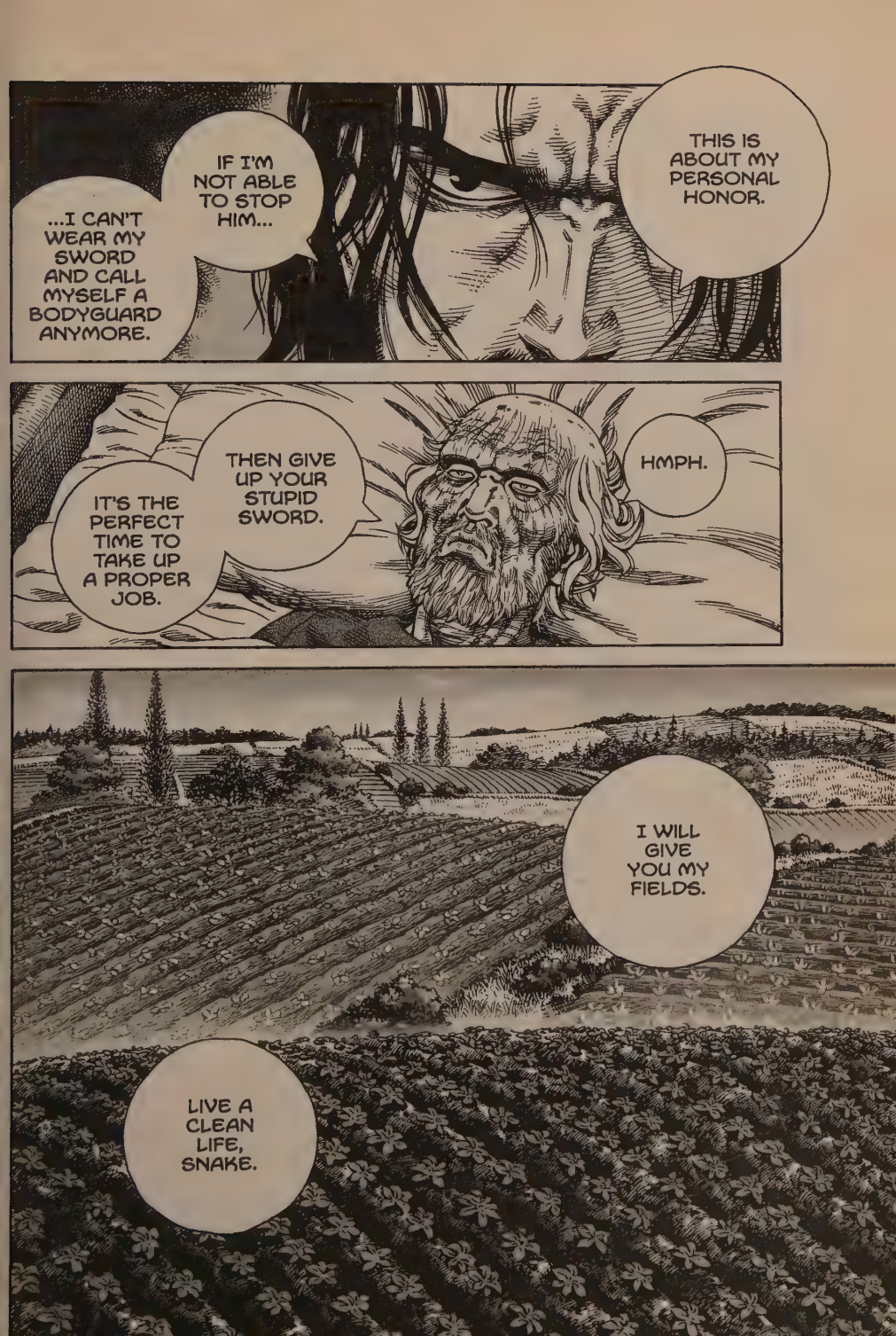

...YES, SIR.


I OWE YOU SOME-THING FOR READING ME THE BIBLE.
I'LL LIKELY NEVER BE BACK ON MY FEET.
MY DEATH IS COMING.


DON'T BRING THAT CRAP UP NOW.
WHY WOULD I TOIL IN THE DIRT-
...TSK.



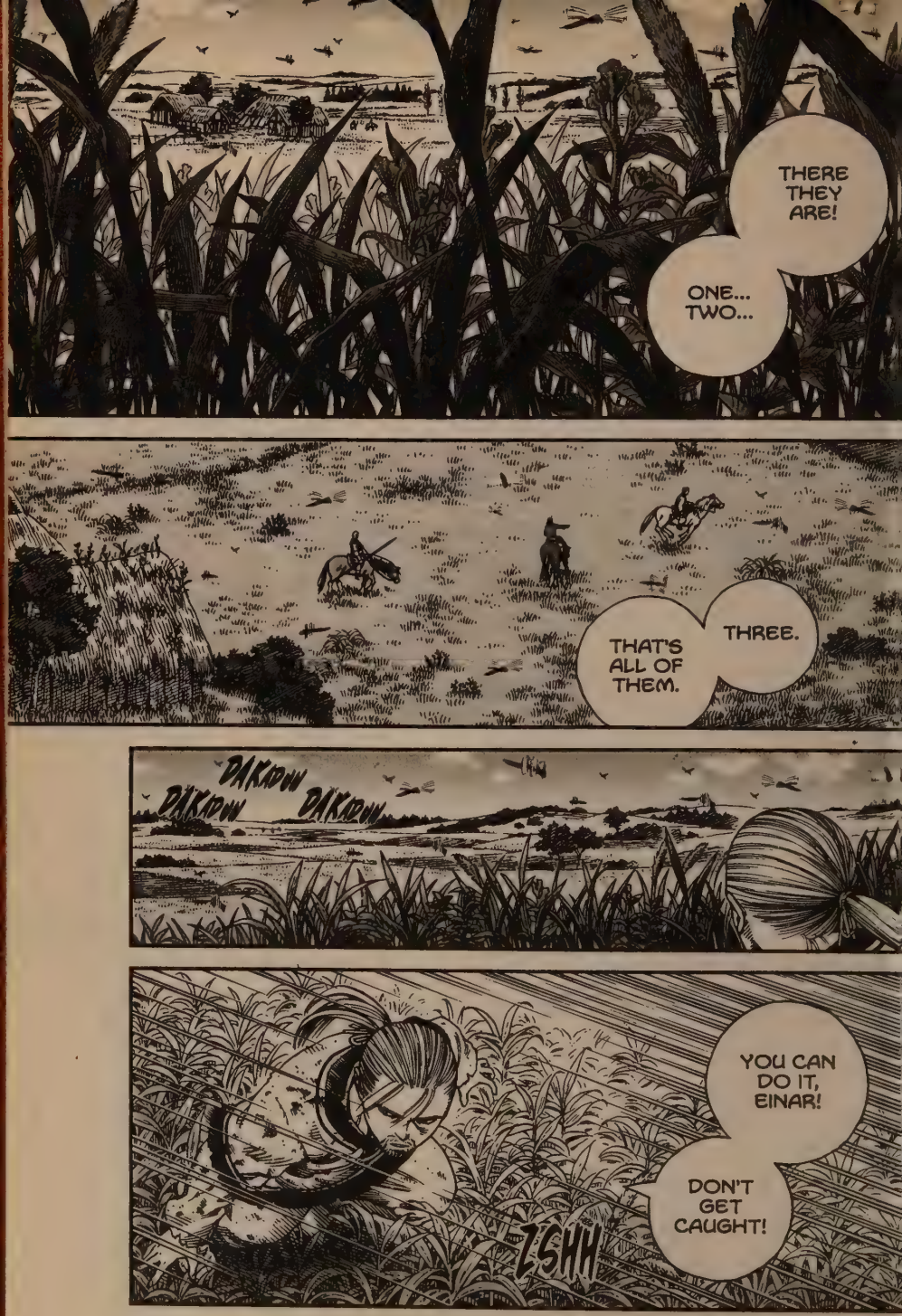

SNAKE!!


...I CAN'T WEAR MY SWORD AND CALL MYSELF A BODYGUARD ANYMORE.
IF I'M NOT ABLE TO STOP HIM...
THIS IS ABOUT MY PERSONAL HONOR.
IT'S THE PERFECT TIME TO TAKE UP A PROPER JOB.
THEN GIVE UP YOUR STUPID SWORD.
HMPH.
I WILL GIVE YOU MY FIELDS.
LIVE A CLEAN LIFE, SNAKE.

CHAPTER 85: CONFRONTATION

A SHADOW ON THE THIRD TREE FROM THE BACK.
IT MUST BE HIM.

...GOOD.


THERE THEY ARE!
ONE... TWO...
THAT'S ALL OF THEM.
THREE.
DAKADW
DAKADW
DAKADW
YOU CAN DO IT, EINAR!
DON'T GET CAUGHT!
ZSHH

!
KSHF

TINK

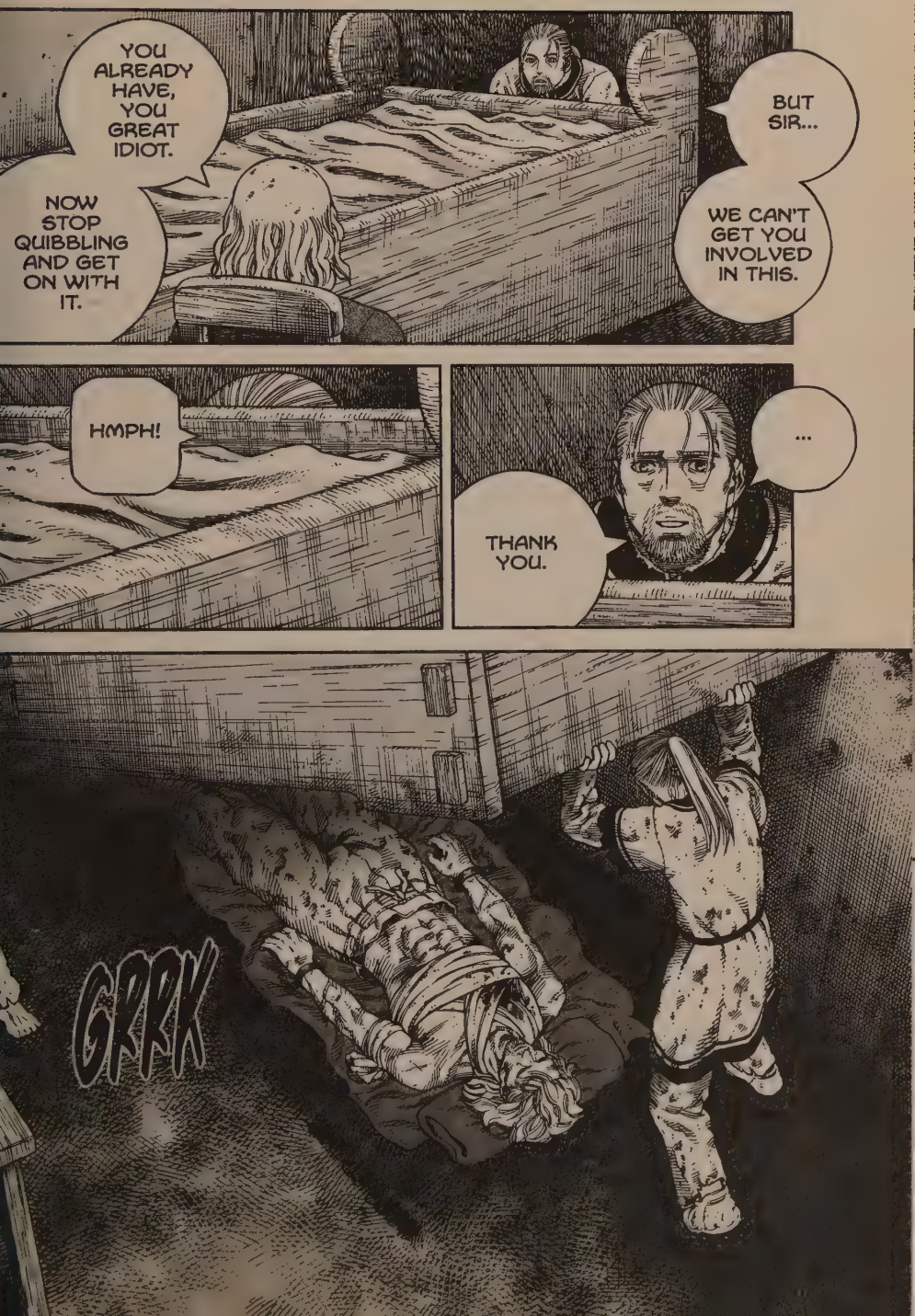
THERE HE GOES! GARDAR'S RACING FOR THE WOODS!
!
HURRY AND CATCH HIM! DON'T LET HIM GET IN THE TREES!
SON OF A BITCH! WE CAN'T TAKE THE HORSES IN THERE!
DAKADUN
DADUN
SHIT!
IT'S SO FAR!
HWEE
HUFF
THAT'S NOT THE SPEED OF A WOUNDED MAN...
...HE'S TOO FAST.

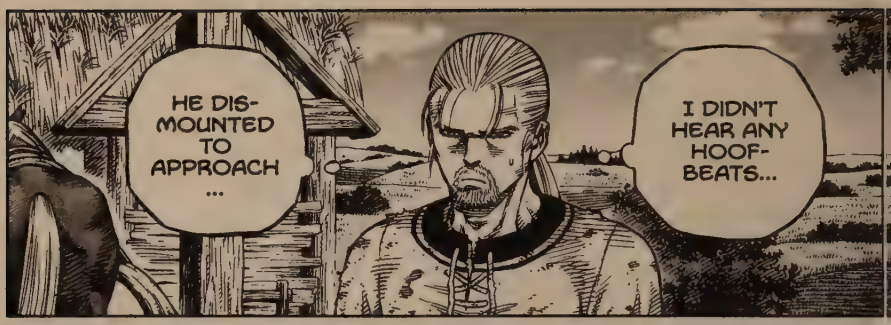
HUFF
HUFF
DAKADUN
DAKADUN
DAKADUN
DAKADUN
EVERY MAN FOLLOW HIM FROM A DIFFERENT DIRECTION! KEEP HIM IN YOUR SIGHT!
SPREAD OUT TO THE SIDES!
DAKADUN
AKADUN
DAKADUN

WHAM
PARDON ME!
OLD MASTER!
FORGIVE ME, OLD MASTER. WE'RE BORROWING YOUR HORSE AND CART.
WE'LL MAKE IT UP THROUGH OUR WORK.
MAKE SURE I'M IN THE CART. IF I'M THERE, NO ONE ON THE FARM WILL THINK TWICE ABOUT IT.
DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME WITH POINTLESS WORRIES.
CREAK

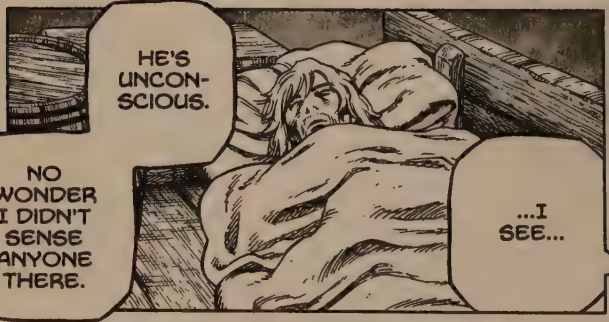
DAKADUN
BUT DON'T GET TOO CLOSE!
SPIDER! BADGER! KEEP FOLLOWING HIM!
DAKADUN
I'LL COME BACK WITH REINFORCE-MENTS SOON! JUST KEEP CHAS-ING HIM UNTIL THEN! GOT THAT?!
IF HE JUST SO HAPPENS TO BE GARDAR, HE'S BEYOND YOUR ABILITY!
BRFF
HRFF
SNAKE?! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!
HUH? BUT-
DADUN

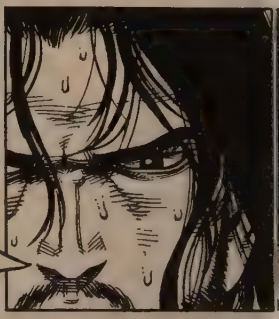
GWUDD...
YOU TREATED HIM WELL.
...AT LEAST HE'S ALIVE.
BUT HE'S COLD AS STONE...
YOU'VE GOT TO HURRY TO THE SOUTHERN BORDER.
IF YOU CAN LEAVE THE COUNTRY, THE GUESTS WILL HAVE A HARDER TIME FOLLOWING.
HE'S LOST TOO MUCH BLOOD.


YOU ALREADY HAVE, YOU GREAT IDIOT.
NOW STOP QUIBBLING AND GET ON WITH IT.
BUT SIR...
WE CAN'T GET YOU INVOLVED IN THIS.
HMPH!
...
THANK YOU.
GRRK

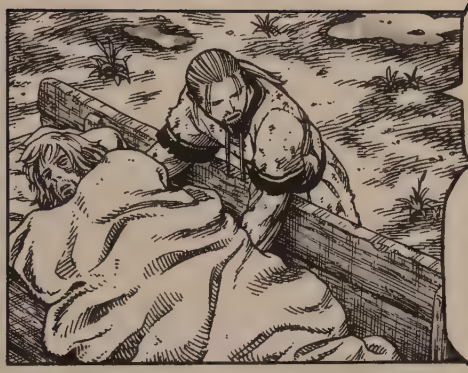

HE DIS-MOUNTED TO APPROACH ...
I DIDN'T HEAR ANY HOOF-BEATS...

UNDER THE BED.
...


HE'S UNCON-SCIOUS.
NO WONDER I DIDN'T SENSE ANYONE THERE.
...I SEE...

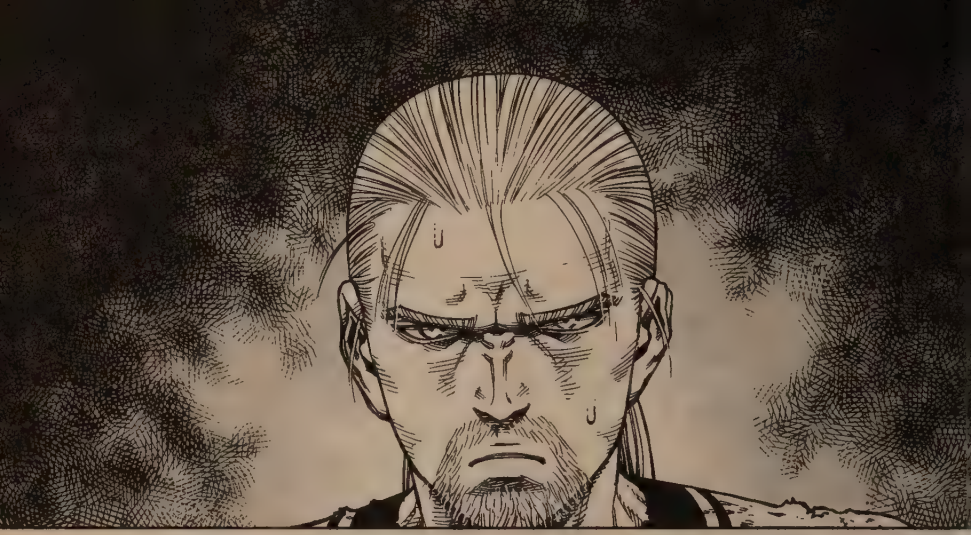


THOR-FINN...

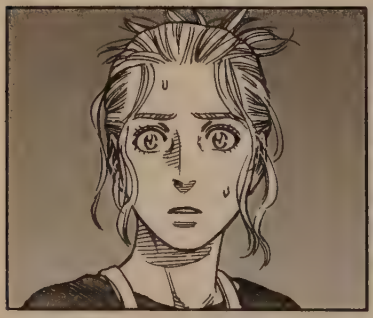


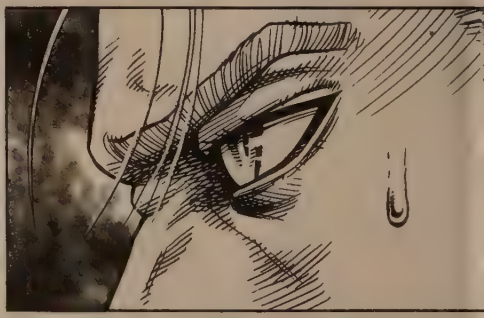
YOU NEED TO STAY WITH US TO THE EDGE OF THE FARM, OLD MASTER.

I WILL SPLIT OFF AFTER A TIME AND ACT AS A DIVERSI...

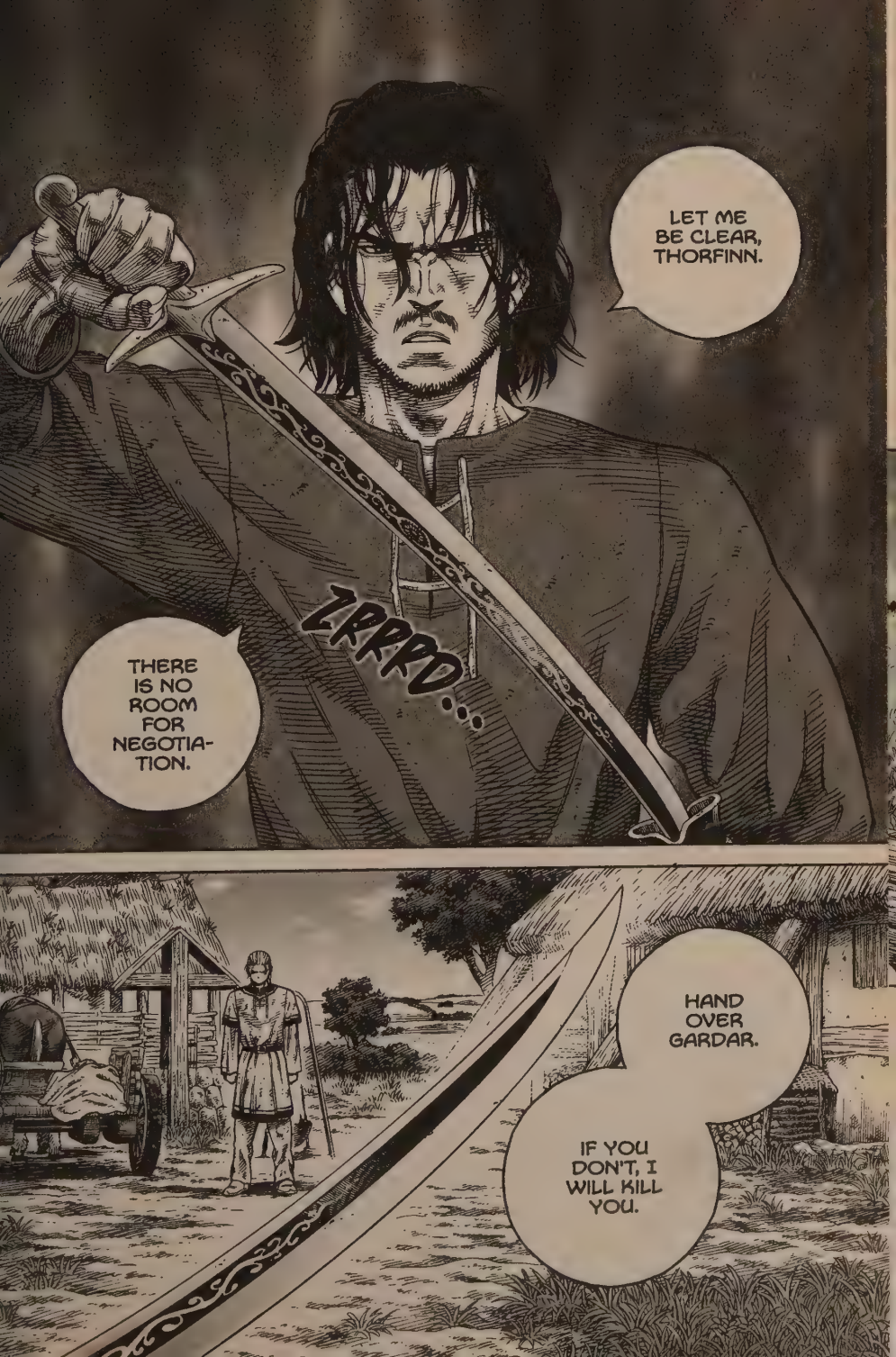


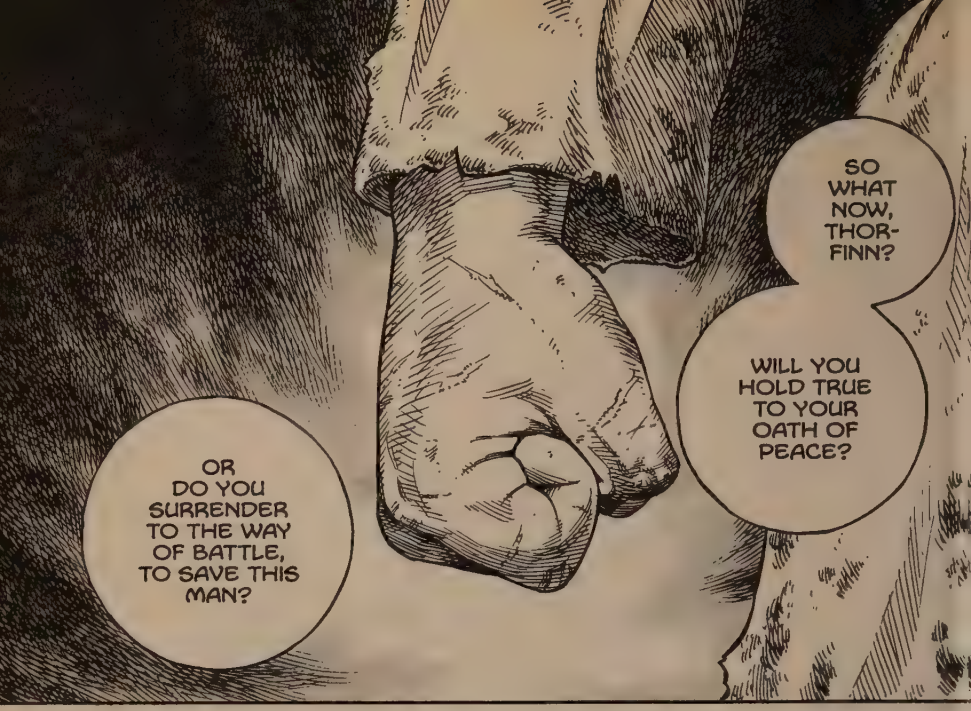
...
...THORFINN?

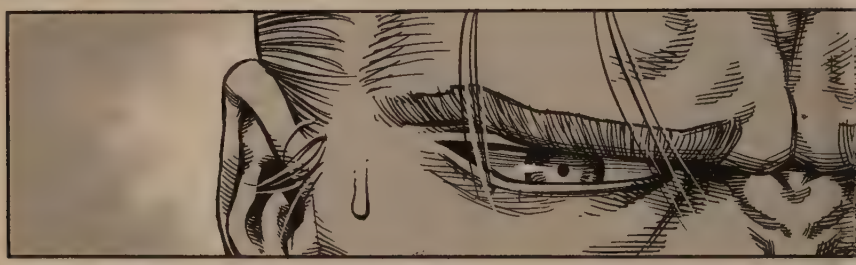




JUST EVADE HIS SWORD AND HIT HIM ON THE CHIN...
IF I KNOCK HIM OUT AND TIE HIM UP, WE CAN ESCAPE.
IT'S JUST SNAKE... NO ONE ELSE.


LET ME BE CLEAR, THORFINN.
ZRRRD...
THERE IS NO ROOM FOR NEGOTIA-TION.
HAND OVER GARDAR.
IF YOU DON'T, I WILL KILL YOU.

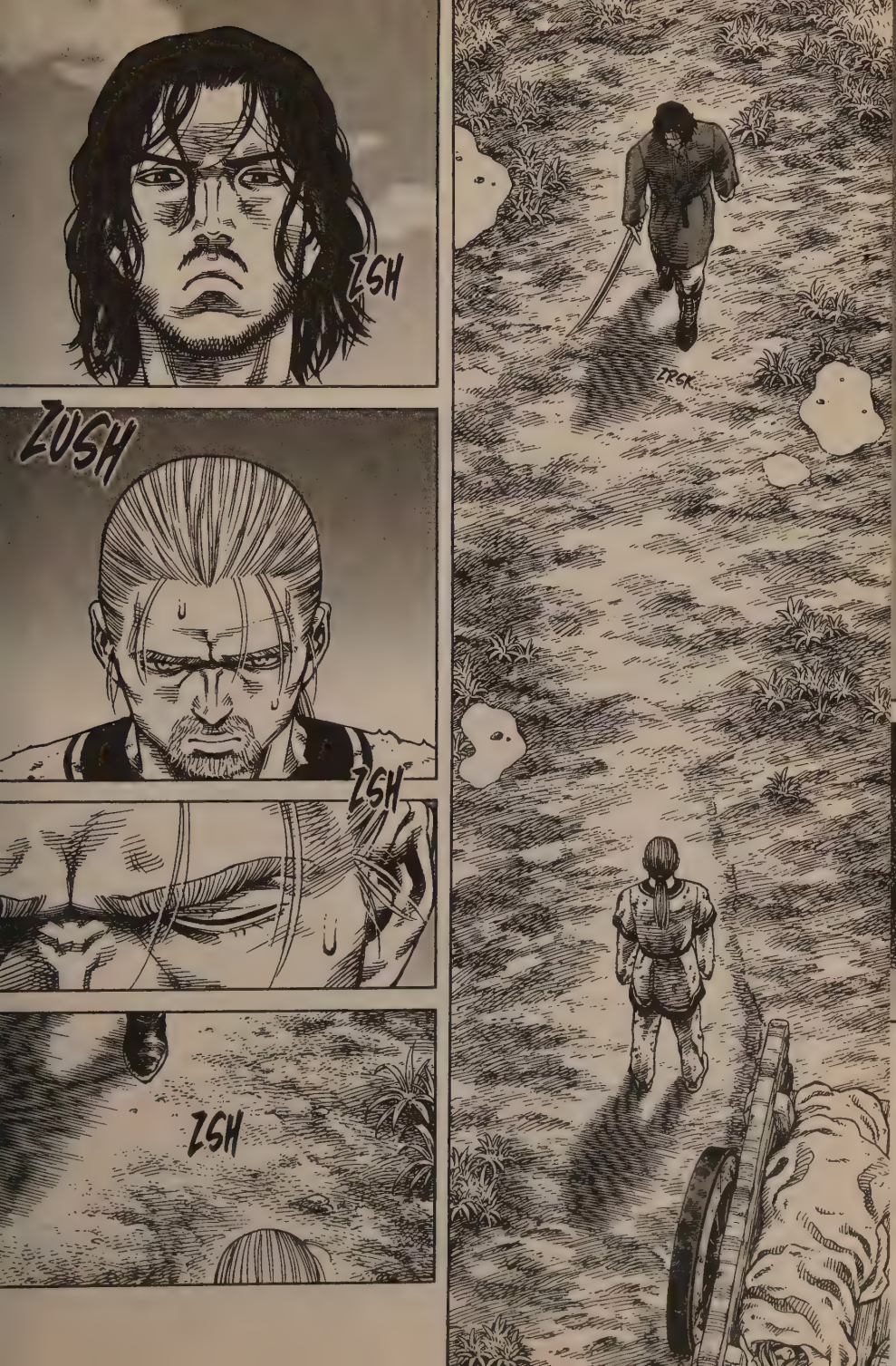

SO WHAT NOW, THOR-FINN?
WILL YOU HOLD TRUE TO YOUR OATH OF PEACE?
OR DO YOU SURRENDER TO THE WAY OF BATTLE, TO SAVE THIS MAN?



YOU'VE GOT TO CHOOSE NOW.
WHICH IS THE PATH TO BEING A "TRUE WARRIOR?"
NO TIME TO THINK.

BACK TO FIGHTING, THORFINN?
WELL, I GUESS YOU DON'T HAVE A *CHOICE* IN THIS SITUATION, DO YOU?
SEE? NOW YOU HAVE PROPER JUSTIFICATION FOR SWINGING THOSE FISTS.
THERE'S NO LUST OR HATRED BEHIND THIS FIGHT; IT'S PURELY *ALTRUISM*.
I SUPPOSE *HE'S* GOT A JUST REASON FOR FIGHTING AS WELL.
BUT THEN AGAIN...

THUNK


ZSH
ZUSH
ZSH
ZSH
ZRGK

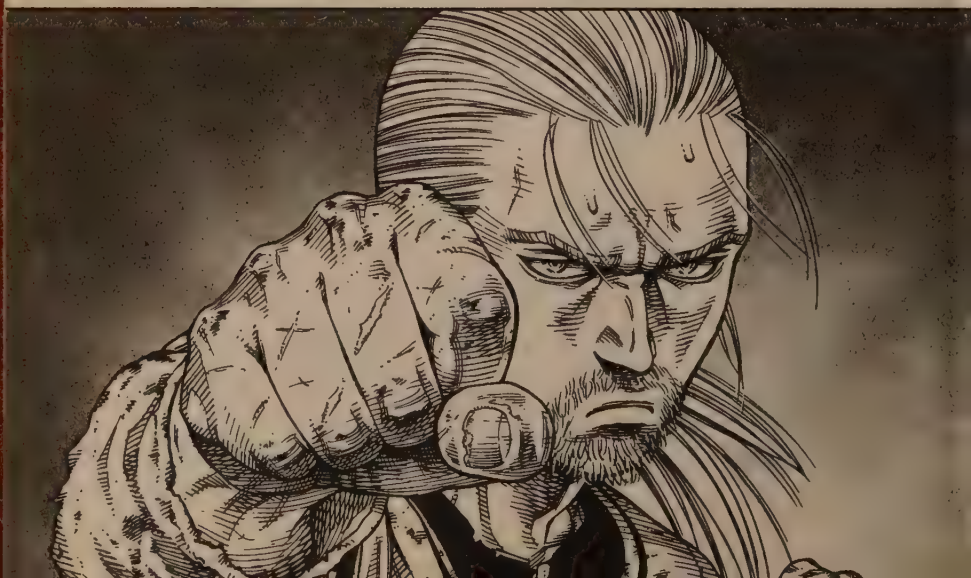
ZZSH
TFK

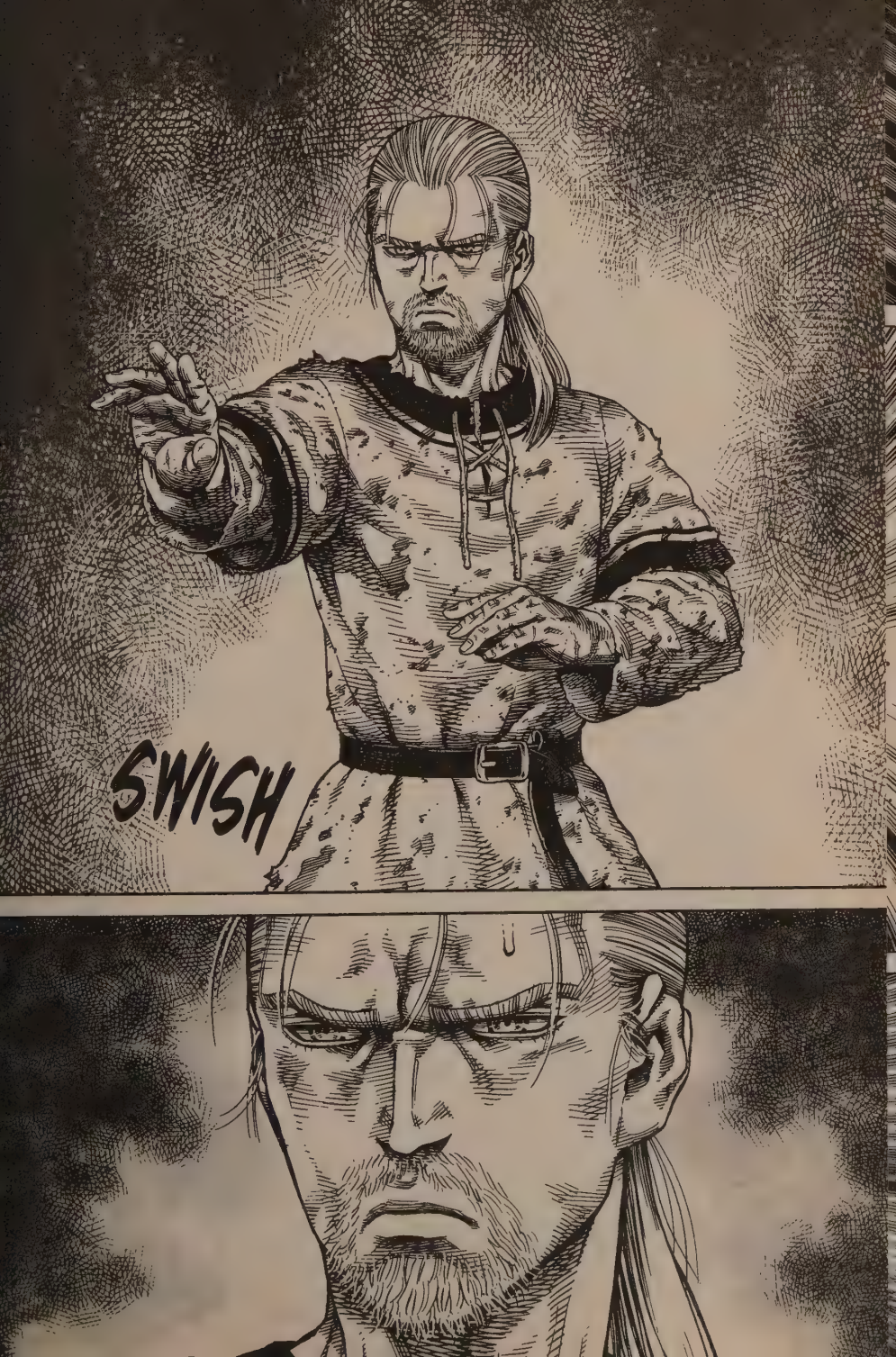
...!!

MAYBE... DAGGERS ?
...THAT'S AN ODD STANCE.
NOT FOR SWORDS, AXES, OR SPEARS.

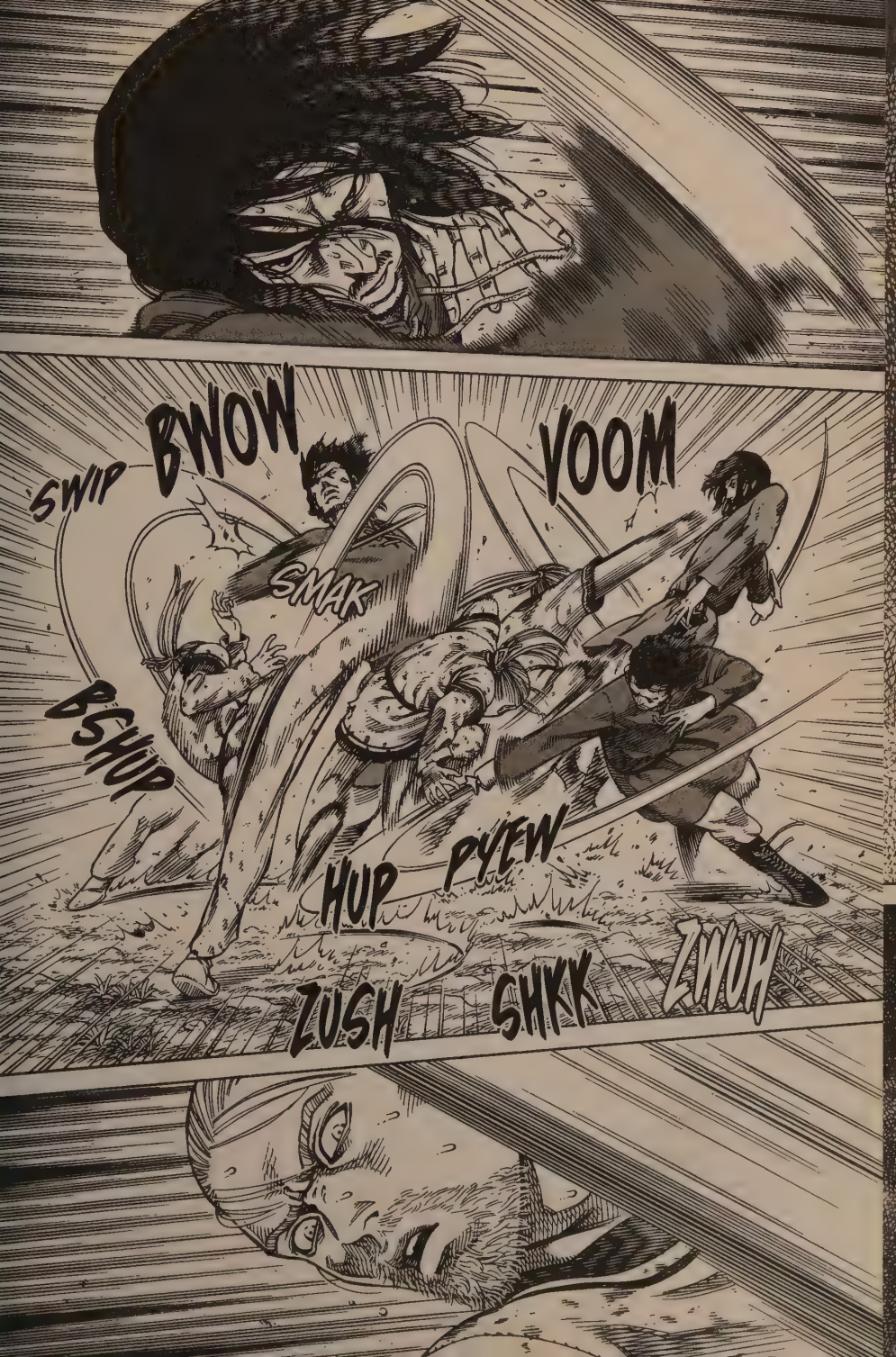
BWISWISH
KP
AMM

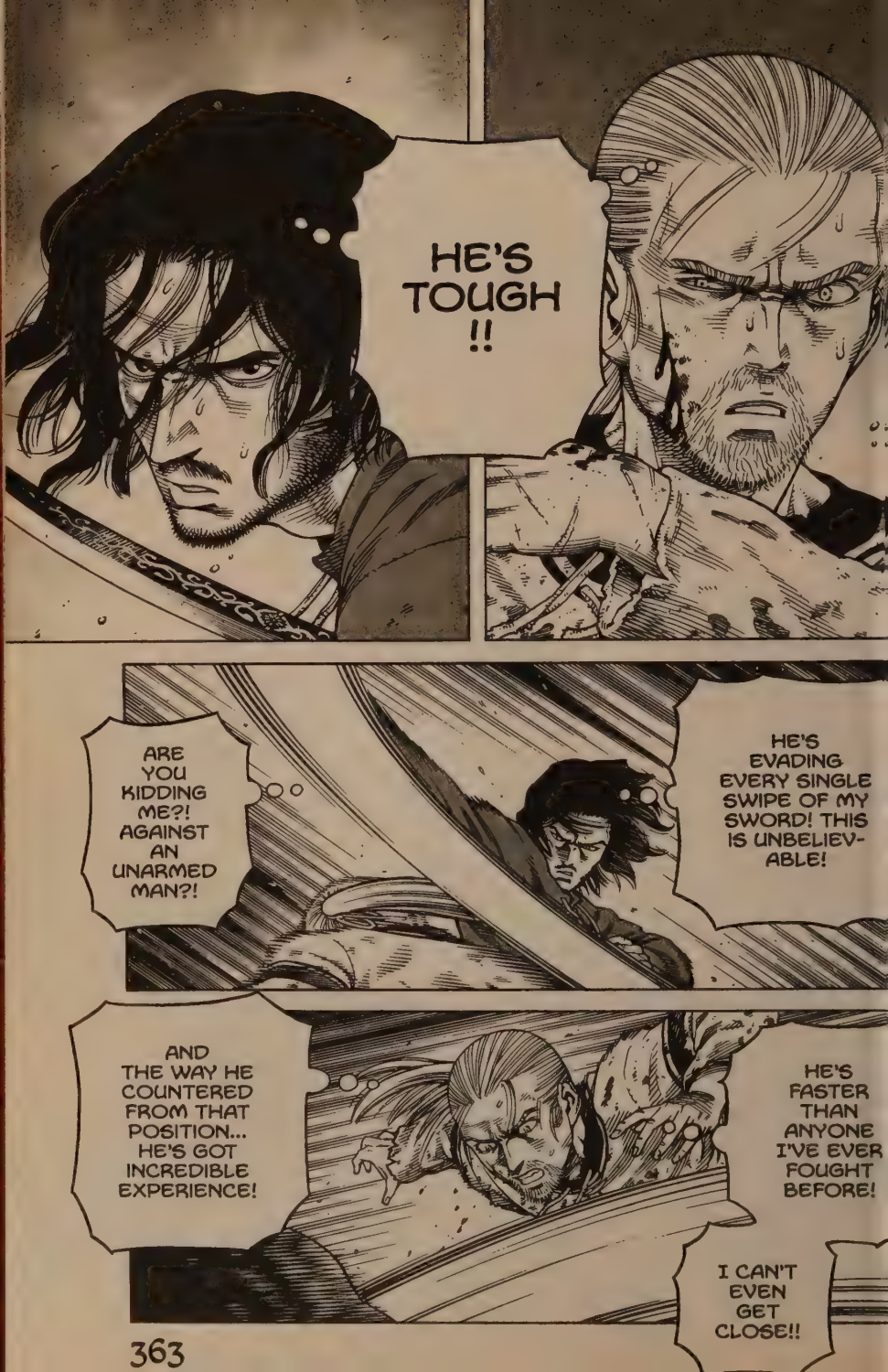
CHAPTER 86: NO GOING HO

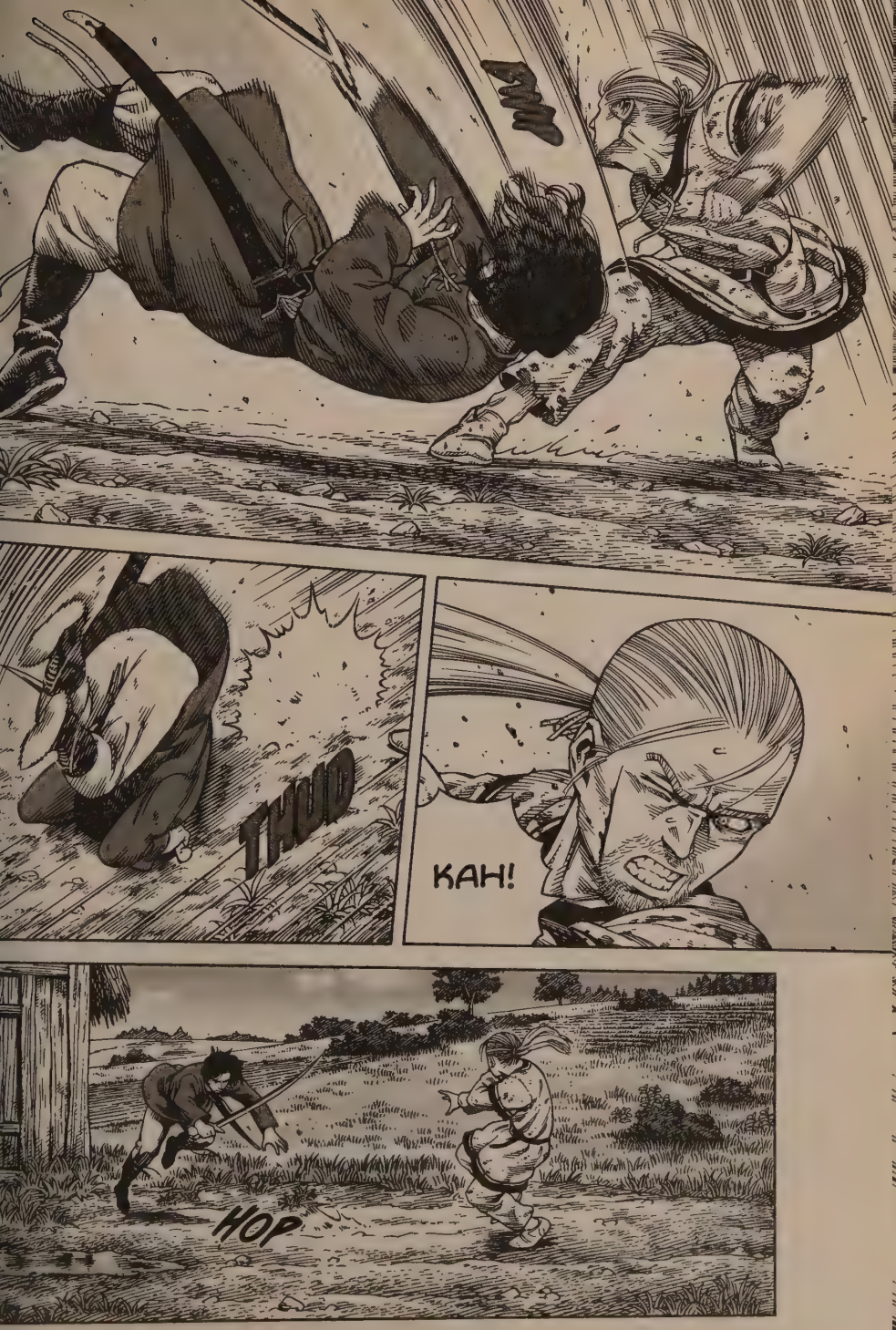



SWISH

BW
OOSH
SHPAK
HNG!


SWIP
BWOW
VOOM
SMAK
BSHUP
HUP
PYEW
ZUSH
SHKK
ZWUH

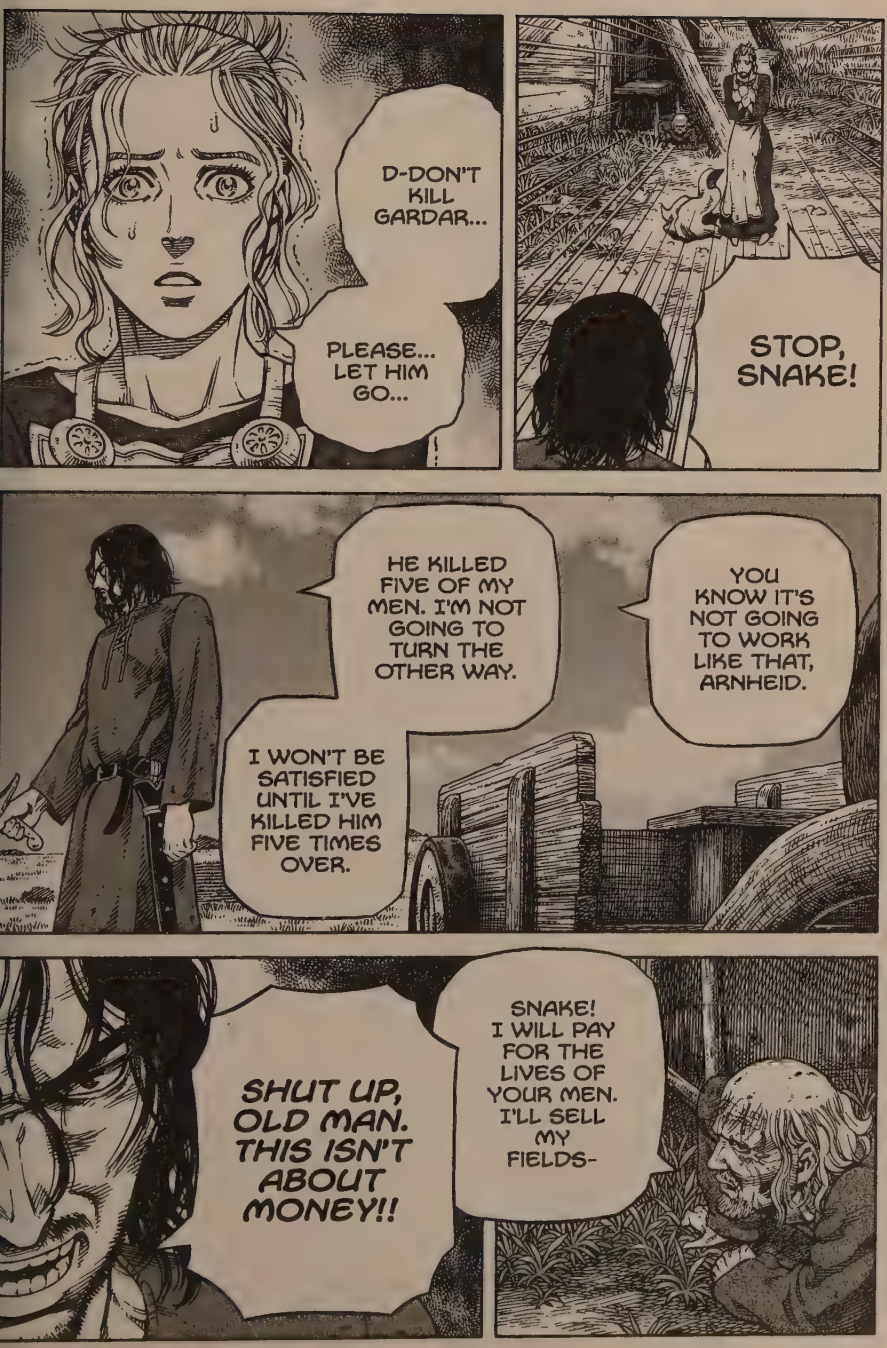

HE'S TOUGH !!
ARE YOU KIDDING ME?! AGAINST AN UNARMED MAN?!
HE'S EVADING EVERY SINGLE SWIPE OF MY SWORD! THIS IS UNBELIEV-ABLE!
AND THE WAY HE COUNTERED FROM THAT POSITION... HE'S GOT INCREDIBLE EXPERIENCE!
HE'S FASTER THAN ANYONE I'VE EVER FOUGHT BEFORE!
I CAN'T EVEN GET CLOSE!!


THUD
KAH!
HOP

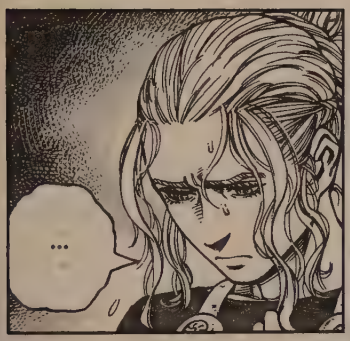
HRGH!
THERE'S THE CART...
HE'S GOT GARDAR!
!!
OH, NO!
FFH
FFH

HOW DOES SUCH A TALENTED FIGHTER END UP A BODYGUARD ON A RURAL FARM...?
HOW CAN THIS BE?! HOW DOES A MAN LIKE HIM WIND UP A SLAVE...?
AH!
LURP...
KSHUNK
THUD

YES, MY MEN ARE IDIOTS, SCUM, AND COMMON VILLAINS ALL!
THEY'RE ALL OUT-CASTS WHO HAVE TO USE ALIASES TO COVER UP FOR THEIR FAILURES ELSE-WHERE!
BUT ARE YOU SAYING I SHOULDN'T CARE IF THEY DIE?! ARE YOU?!
TELL ME, THORFINN, ARNHEID! WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE IN THEIR WORTH?!
DOES THIS GARDAR TRULY HAVE A RIGHT TO LIVE?!
MORE THAN MY FIVE MEN?!


D-DON'T KILL GARDAR...
PLEASE... LET HIM GO...
STOP, SNAKE!
HE KILLED FIVE OF MY MEN. I'M NOT GOING TO TURN THE OTHER WAY.
YOU KNOW IT'S NOT GOING TO WORK LIKE THAT, ARNHEID.
I WON'T BE SATISFIED UNTIL I'VE KILLED HIM FIVE TIMES OVER.
SHUT UP, OLD MAN. THIS ISN'T ABOUT MONEY!!
SNAKE! I WILL PAY FOR THE LIVES OF YOUR MEN. I'LL SELL MY FIELDS-

KAH!
SHUD...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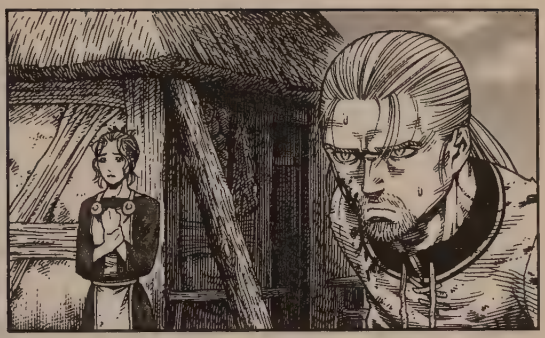
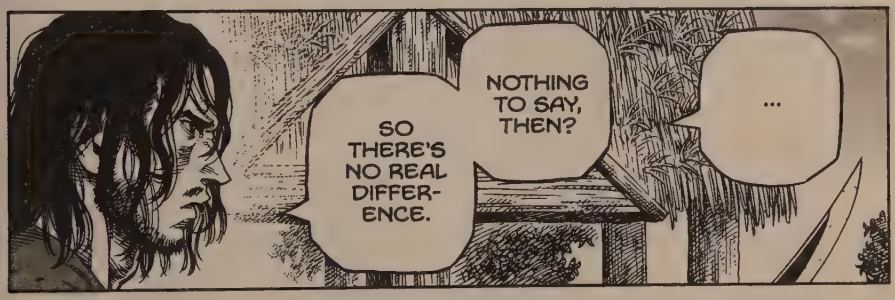
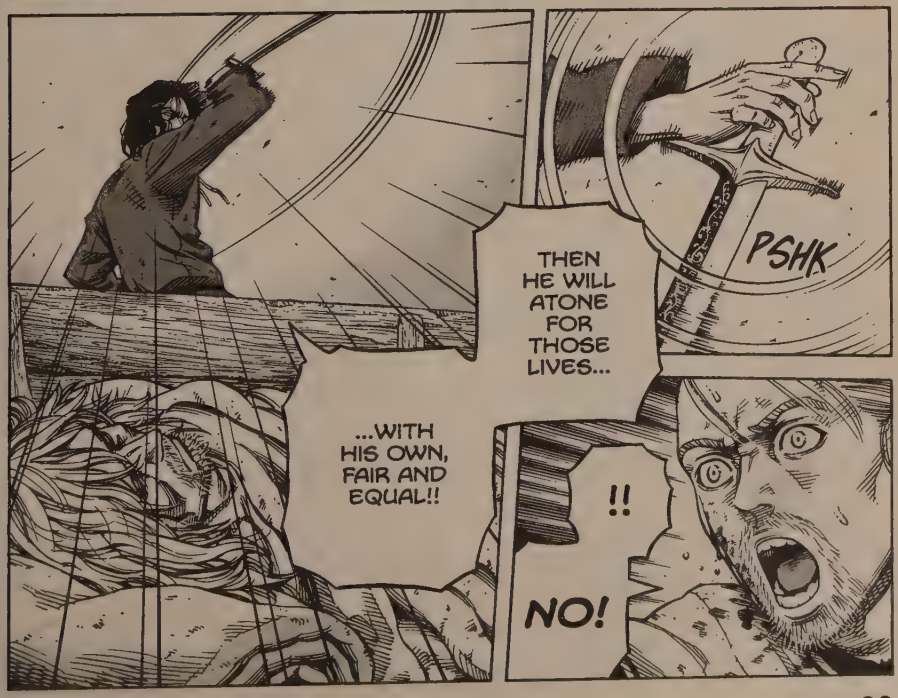
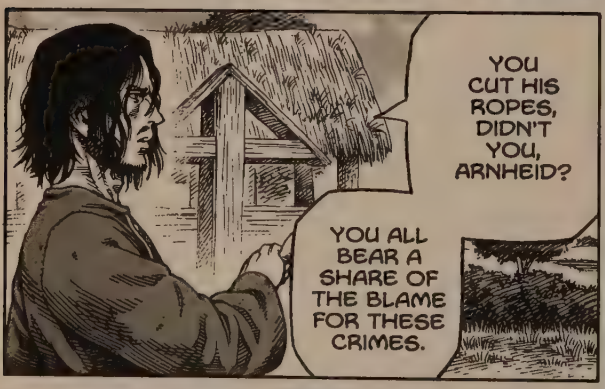


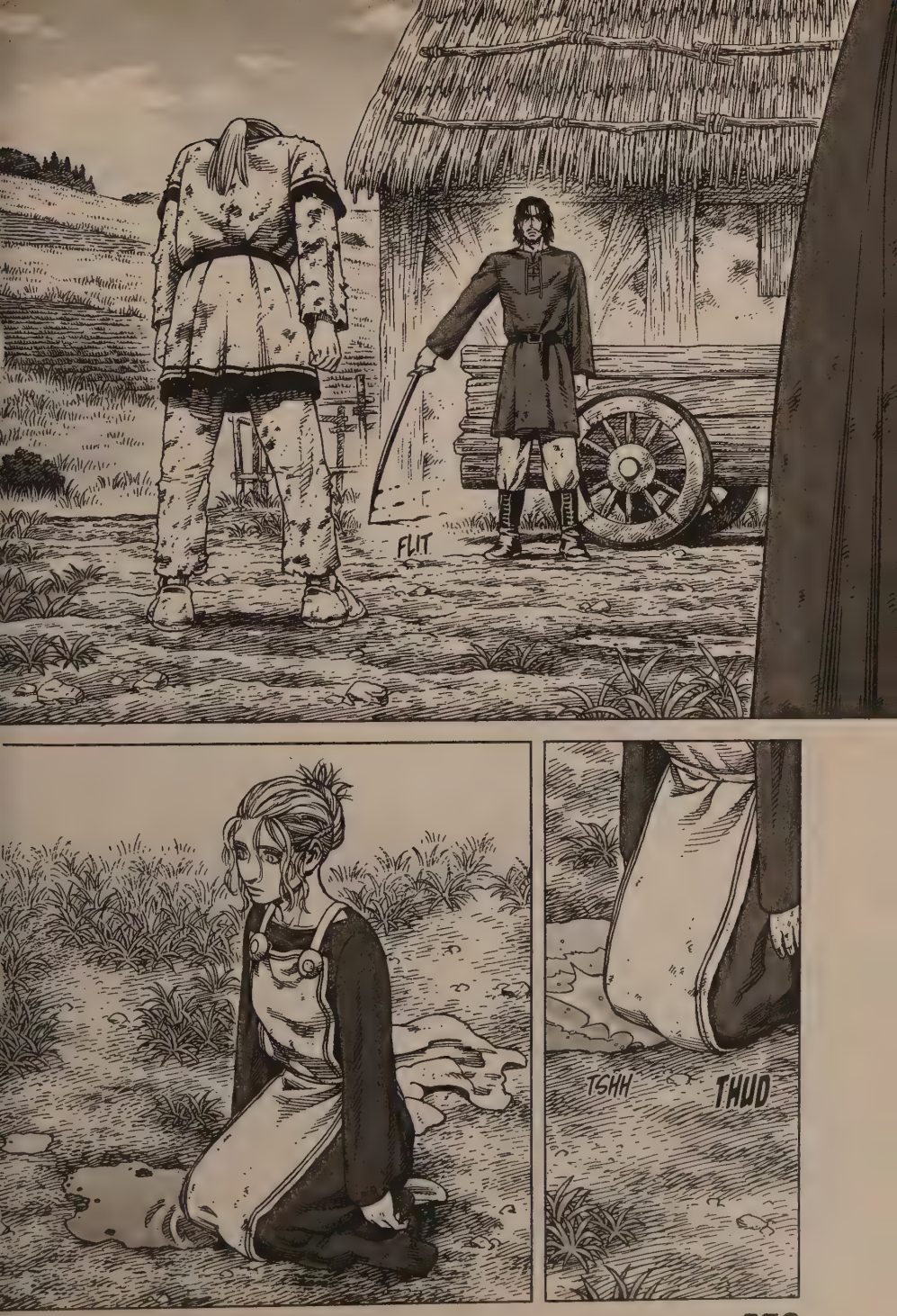

SO THERE'S NO REAL DIFFER-ENCE.
NOTHING TO SAY, THEN?
...


PSHK
THEN HE WILL ATONE FOR THOSE LIVES...
...WITH HIS OWN, FAIR AND EQUAL!!
!!
NO!

WILL YOU AVENGE GARDAR NOW?
DO YOU TWO WANT TO CONTINUE?


YOU CUT HIS ROPES, DIDN'T YOU, ARNHEID?
YOU ALL BEAR A SHARE OF THE BLAME FOR THESE CRIMES.

GSHK
I'LL TIE YOU UP UNTIL THE MASTER GETS...


FLIT
TSHH
THUD

!!
GRG!
HIK!
GRRP
GSHK

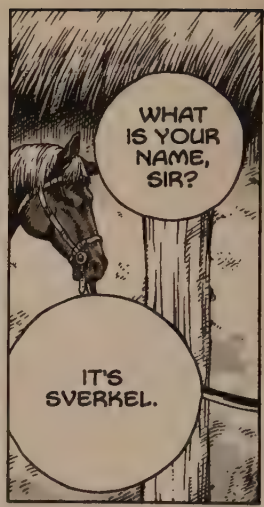
ENOUGH, GARDAR! HE'S UNCON-SCIOUS!
IF YOU BLOCK HIS AIR ANY LONGER, HE'LL DIE!
HOW IS HE SO STRONG ?!
SHIT!
GARDAR!!
...

G
R
R
R
LKK
LSHH
GAK
GAK
G
!!
SNAKE!!
SLIP...

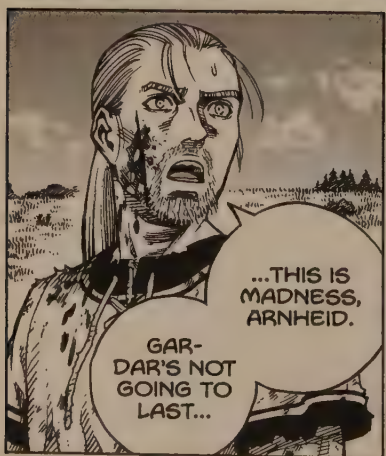
WHERE IS HE NOW...?
HJALTI...
CLANK...
KTHUD
IT'S TOO LATE FOR HIM NOW...
THE SWORD WENT STRAIGHT THROUGH HIS BODY...
I SENT HIM AWAY BEFORE THE FIGHTING STARTED.
HE'S WITH YOUR BROTHER'S FAMILY BACK IN BIRKA.
HJALTI IS... IS...

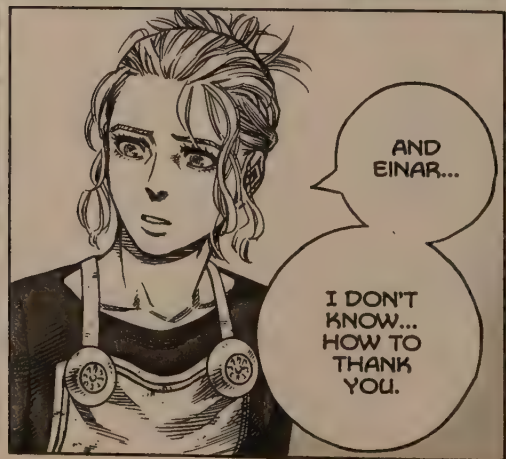
LET'S GO, GARDAR...
WE'LL GO BACK HOME...
YOU'VE DONE ENOUGH. NOBODY IS BLOCKING OUR WAY ANYMORE.
AND H... HJALTI'S WAITING, TOO.

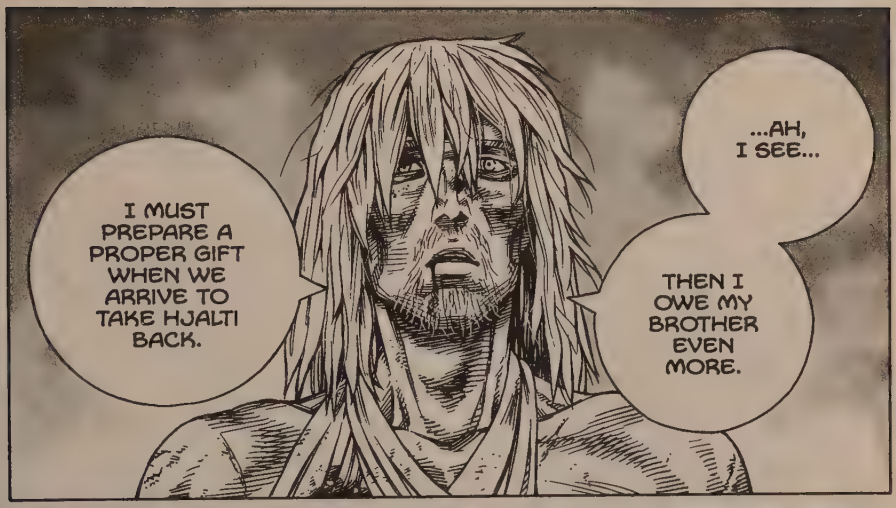
THANK YOU...
...MR. SVERKEL.

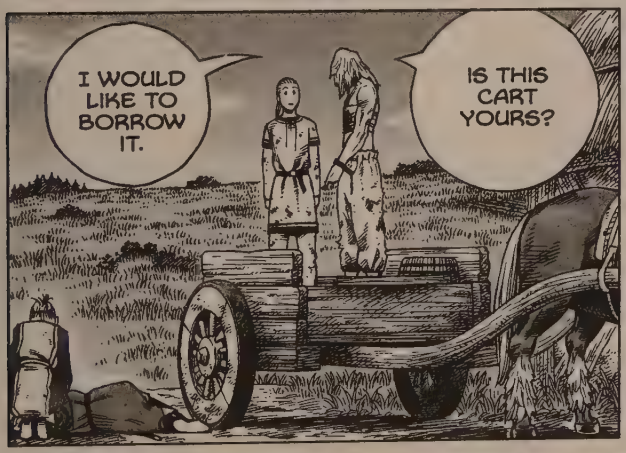

WHAT IS YOUR NAME, SIR?
IT'S SVERKEL.

THORFINN...

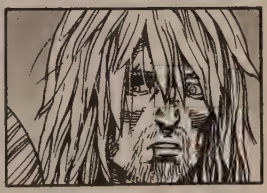

...THIS IS MADNESS, ARNHEID.
GAR-DAR'S NOT GOING TO LAST...


AND EINAR...
I DON'T KNOW... HOW TO THANK YOU.

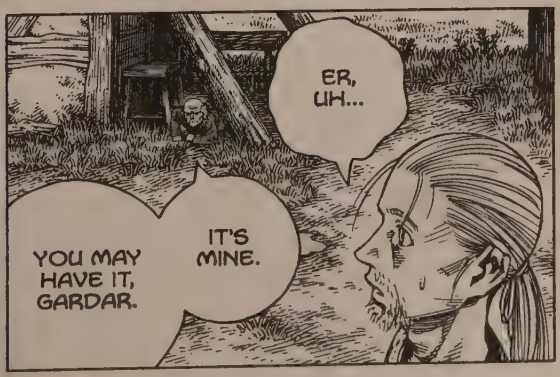

I MUST PREPARE A PROPER GIFT WHEN WE ARRIVE TO TAKE HJALTI BACK.
...AH, I SEE...
THEN I OWE MY BROTHER EVEN MORE.


I WOULD LIKE TO BORROW IT.
IS THIS CART YOURS?

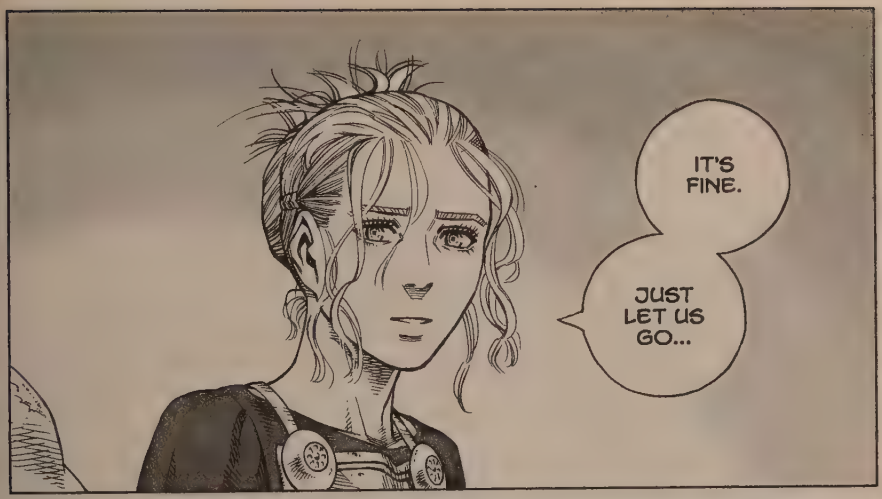
...

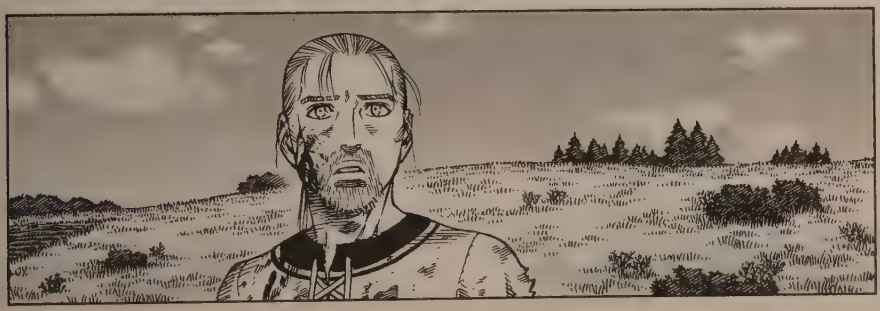


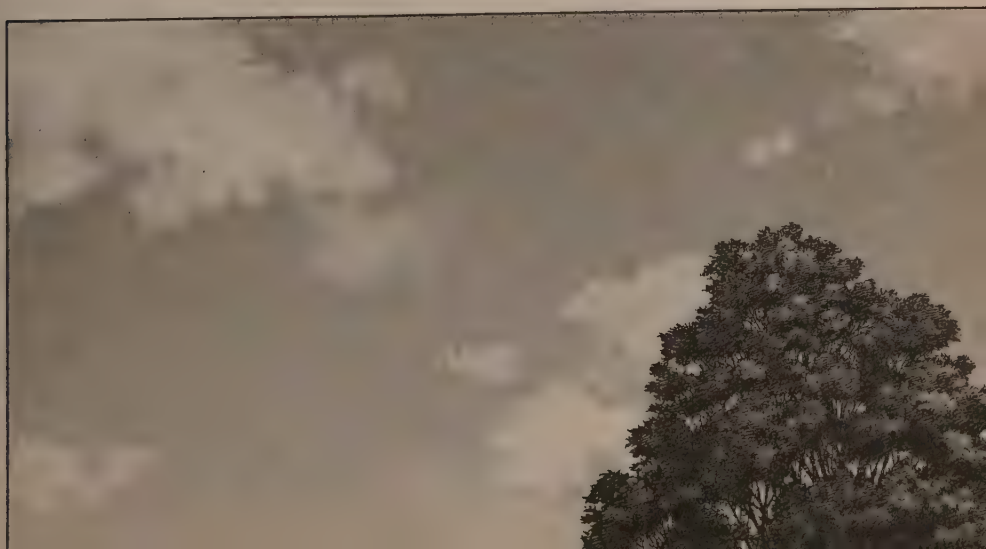
GO HOME.
BEGONE.

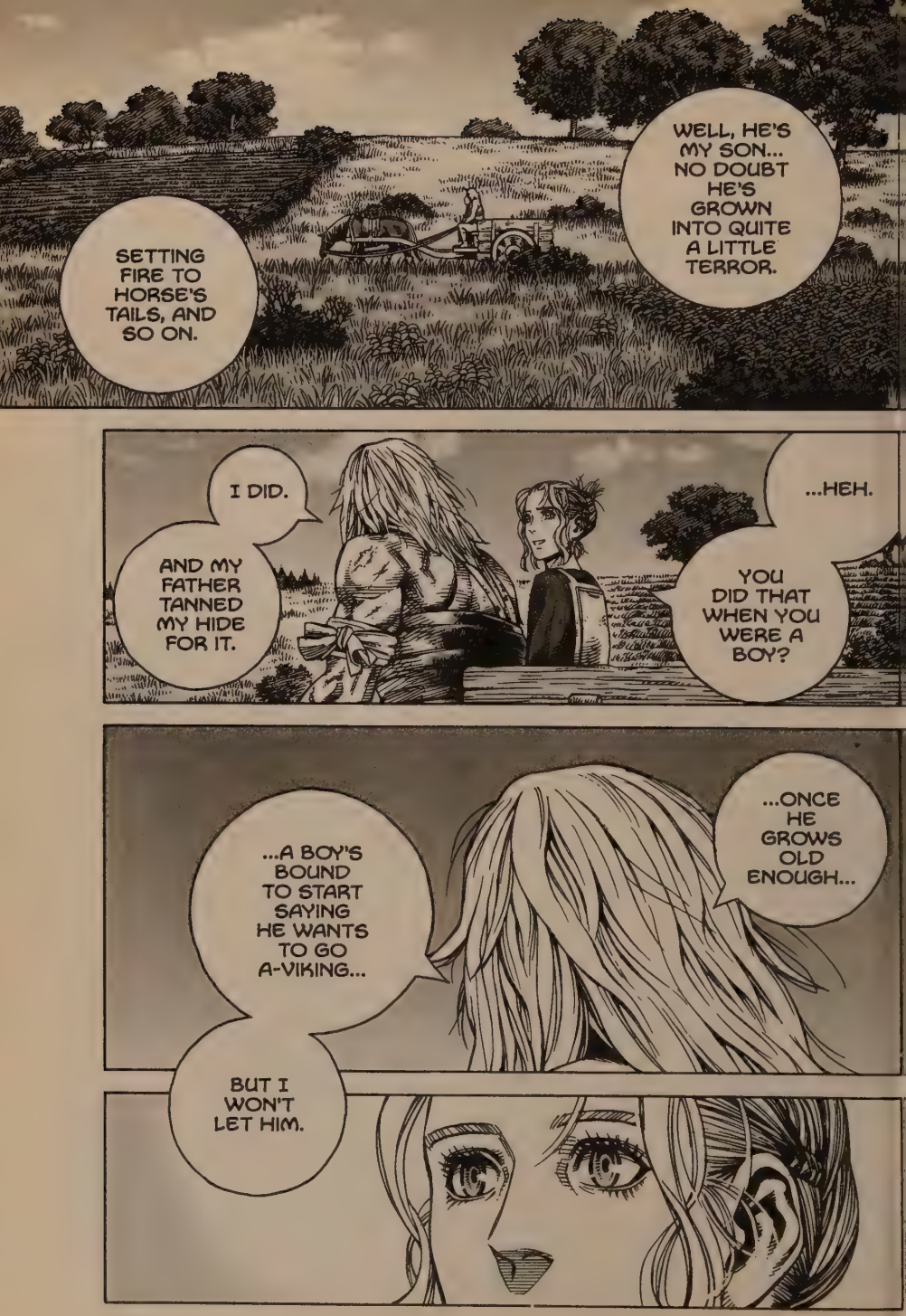

ER, UH...
YOU MAY HAVE IT, GARDAR.
IT'S MINE.

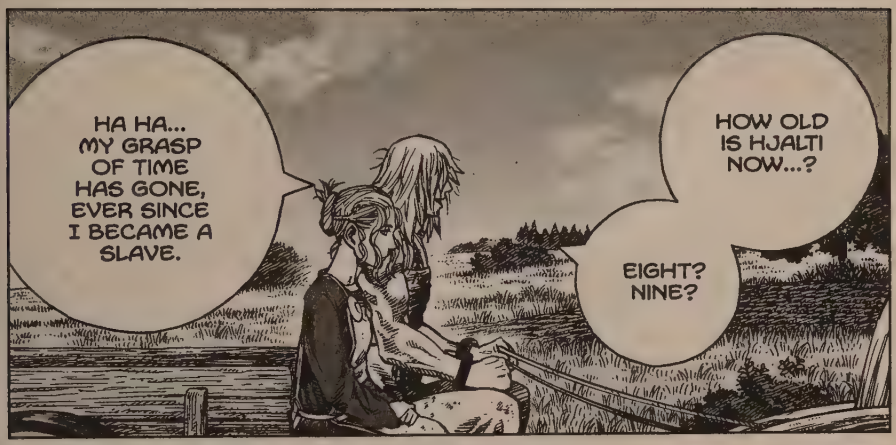
SHUNKA
SHUNKA
SHUNKA
THUNK
THONK
THUNK

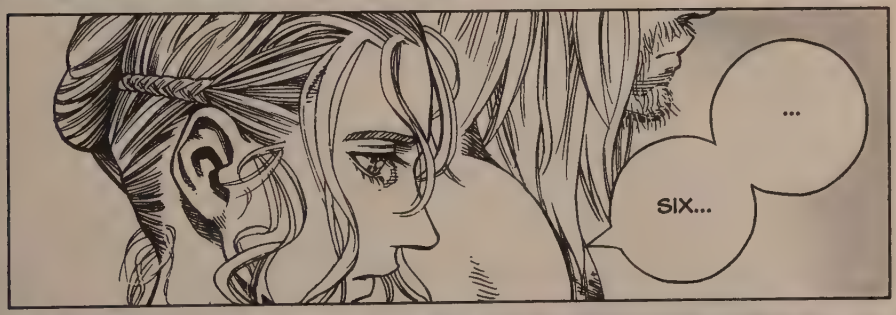

IT'S FINE.
JUST LET US GO...



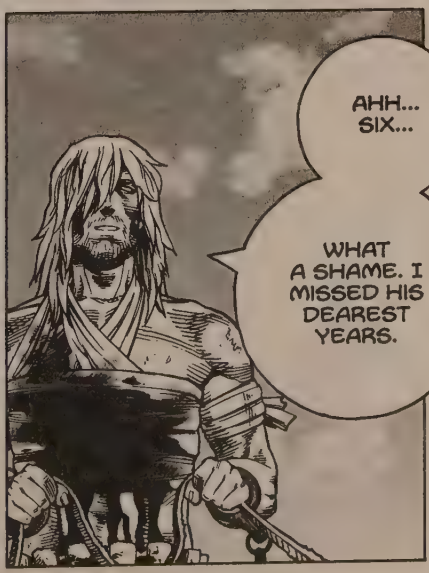


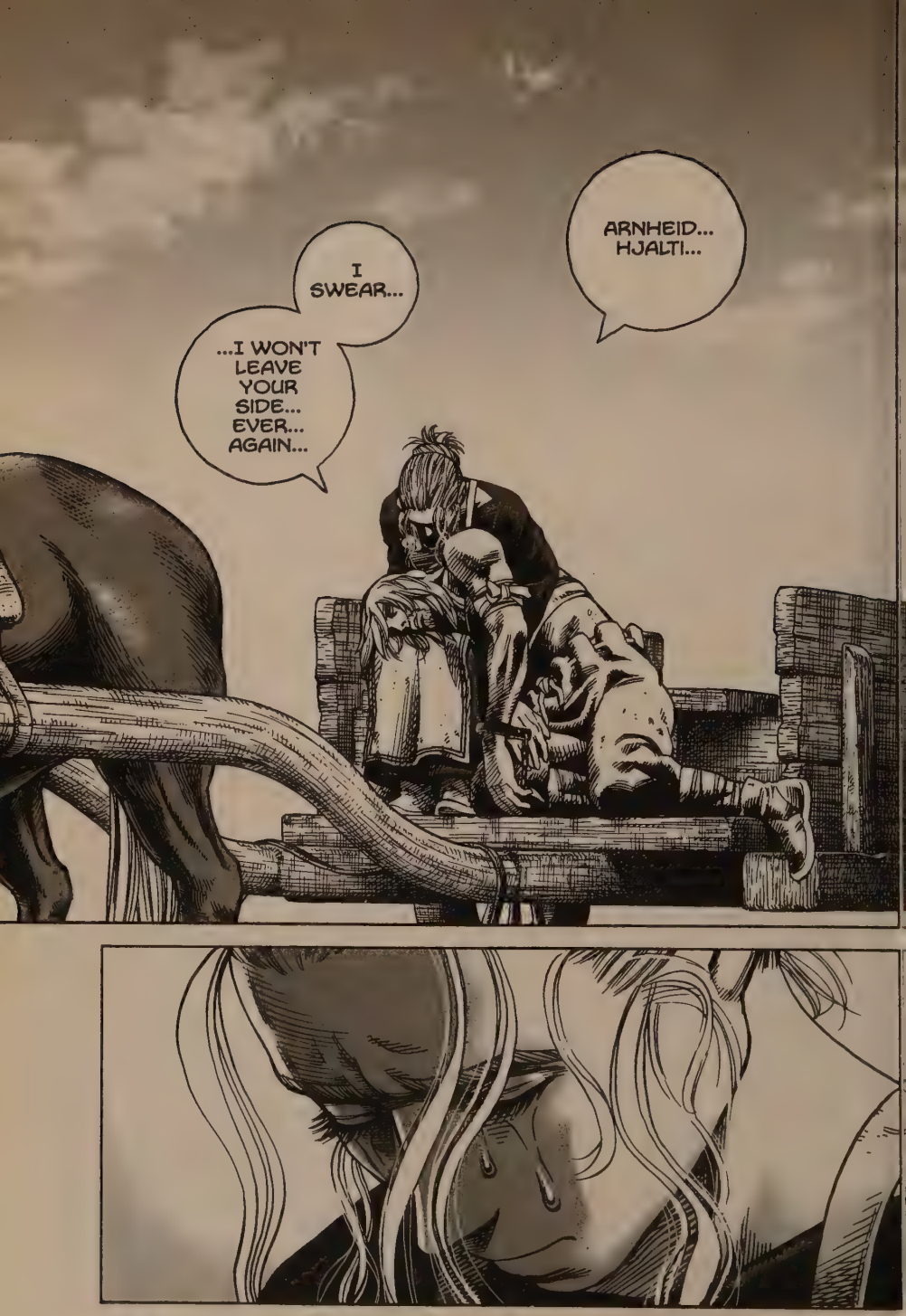

SETTING FIRE TO HORSE'S TAILS, AND SO ON.
WELL, HE'S MY SON... NO DOUBT HE'S GROWN INTO QUITE A LITTLE TERROR.
I DID.
AND MY FATHER TANNED MY HIDE FOR IT.
...HEH.
YOU DID THAT WHEN YOU WERE A BOY?
...A BOY'S BOUND TO START SAYING HE WANTS TO GO A-VIKING...
...ONCE HE GROWS OLD ENOUGH...
BUT I WON'T LET HIM.

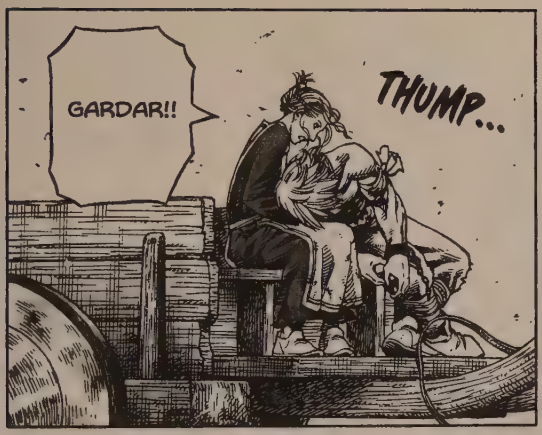

HA HA... MY GRASP OF TIME HAS GONE, EVER SINCE I BECAME A SLAVE.
HOW OLD IS HJALTI NOW...?
EIGHT? NINE?


...
SIX...

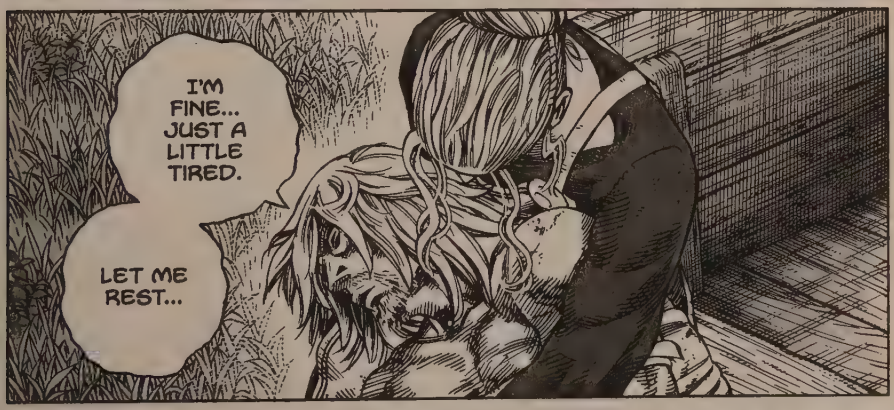
HE WAS ONLY ONE WHEN I SAID GOOD-BYE.
THE LITTLE TYKE'S PROBABLY FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT US BY NOW.
DRIP
DRIP
KSHUNKA SHUNKA


AHH... SIX...
WHAT A SHAME. I MISSED HIS DEAREST YEARS.

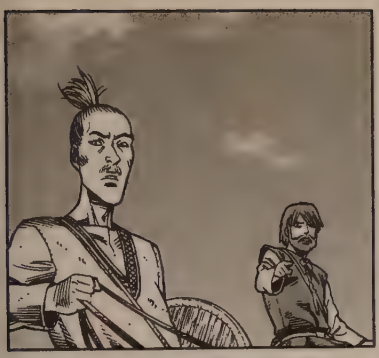

ARNHEID... HJALTI...
I SWEAR...
...I WON'T LEAVE YOUR SIDE... EVER... AGAIN...


GARDAR!!
THUMP...

LURCH

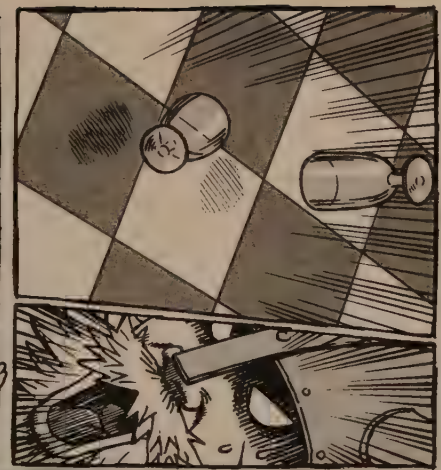

I'M FINE... JUST A LITTLE TIRED.
LET ME REST...

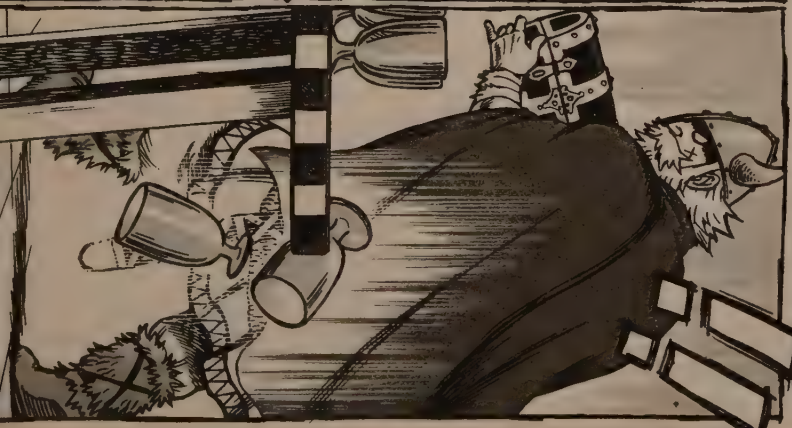
VINLAND SAGA MAP
THORFINN'S TRAVELS
SWEDISH VILLAGE
The place where Gardar and Arnheid lived with their son, Hjalti. A war broke out over an iron-rich swamp, and the village was raided.
ARNHEID
GARDAR
Iceland
Reykjavik
Sea of Norway
Faroes
Shetland
Norway
Oslo
Sweden
Gulf of Bothnia
Finland
Lake Ladoga
Gulf of Finland
England
North Sea
Ireland
Danelaw
Wales
London
Thames R.
Denmark
Baltic Sea
W. Dvina R.
Rhine R.
Weser R.
Elbe R.
Oder R.
Vistula R.
Atlantic Ocean
Paris
Normandy
Seine R.
Francia
Loire R.
JELLING
The capital of Denmark. Ketil and his sons Thorgil and Olmar were trapped in a scheme of Canute's, and needed the help of Leif Ericson's ship to escape.
CANUTE
WULF
KETIL
THORGIL
OLMAR
LEIF
KETIL'S FARM
A farm where Thorfinn works as a slave. It is invaded by Gardar, a dangerous runaway slave from a nearby farm.
THORFINN
EINAR
SNAKE
SVERKEL

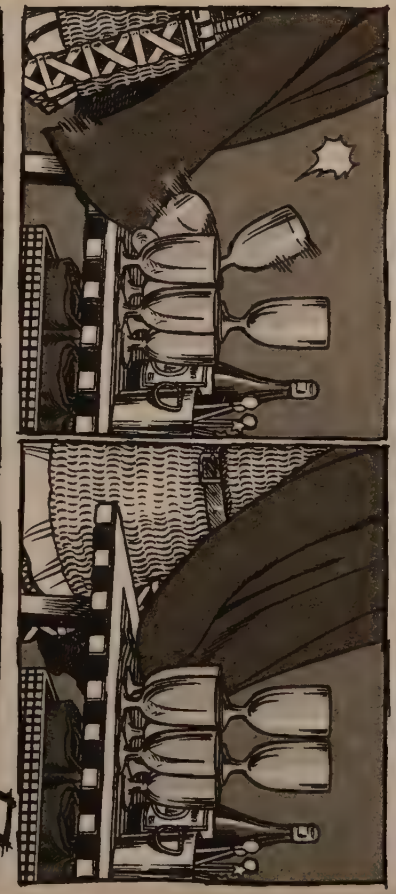


HAITO KUMAGAI ACCORDING TO MAKOTO YUKIMURA

IF, LIKE ME, YOU'VE GOT SOME LEFTOVER PAGES TO FILL AT THE END OF YOUR VOLUME, THIS TALENTED ASSISTANT IS YOUR MAN! KUMAGAI WHIPPED THIS UP FOR ME IN NO TIME AT ALL. HE REALLY DOES WORK FAST. WHAT WOULD I DO WITHOUT HIM?







BONUS MANGA

NEIGHBORS OF MUSHMURA VILLAGE

DRAWN BY: HAITO KUMAGAI

BLUSH
WA RI

DOKIN
SO LONG!
CLENCH!
DOKIN
DOKIN
DOKIN
WHOOSH!

In any text I consult, it always says that the Vikings loved freedom and hated control and restrictions. To them, freedom was something won and maintained by strength. There was no means to rule a Viking other than crushing him with military or economic force. "King" was just the title of the one who wielded the most power. On the flip side, this meant that those who were ruled over and lost their freedom suffered because they were too weak. In a society where power is everything, it is a matter of fact that the weakest will be slaves. It was a shared cultural understanding that those who were too weak to protect their own freedom were at fault for their plight. There was no guilt or doubt about the strong enslaving, subordinating, selling, or killing the weak. That was just the culture they lived in. So how did the kindhearted live in such a culture? There must have been some who hated the meritocracy and the punishment of the weak. It must have been very painful to have such a large gap between the customs of society and one's own sensibilities. Did they have to keep their ideas secret, and restrict themselves to silently lamenting the plight of mistreated slaves without taking action? Such a person adrift in the culture of the time must have been nameless and penniless. In fact, perhaps the only people who felt that way would've been slaves themselves. Only the strong leave their names in history; the stories of such ordinary minorities are not saved over the centuries. That's one of the more bothersome aspects of history. I just want to know.

MAKOTO YUKIMURA

VINLAND SAGA

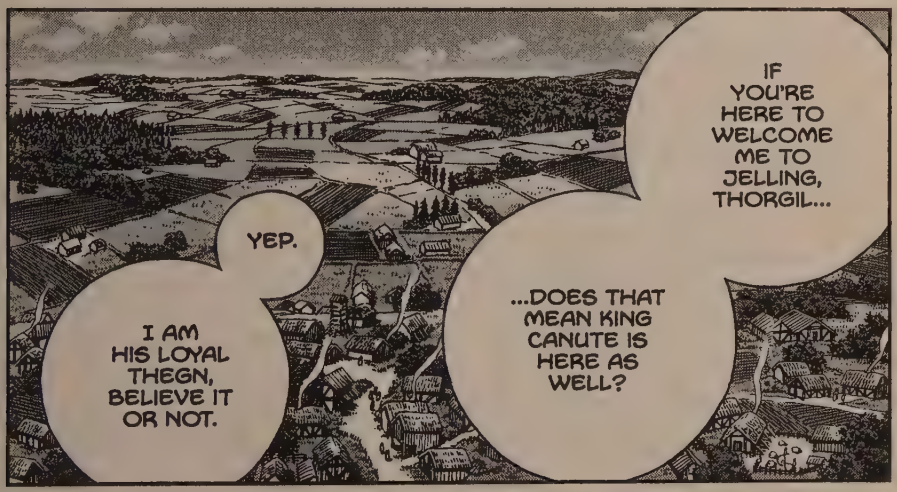
SUPPLEMENTAL DESIGNS

SNAKE'S SWORD

Translation Notes

Thegn, page 102

A personal servant of a lord or king, in this case referring to official soldiers as opposed to militia men. The definition varies depending on the time and place; for example, the Scottish thanes as seen in Shakespeare's Macbeth were royal officials much like counts.

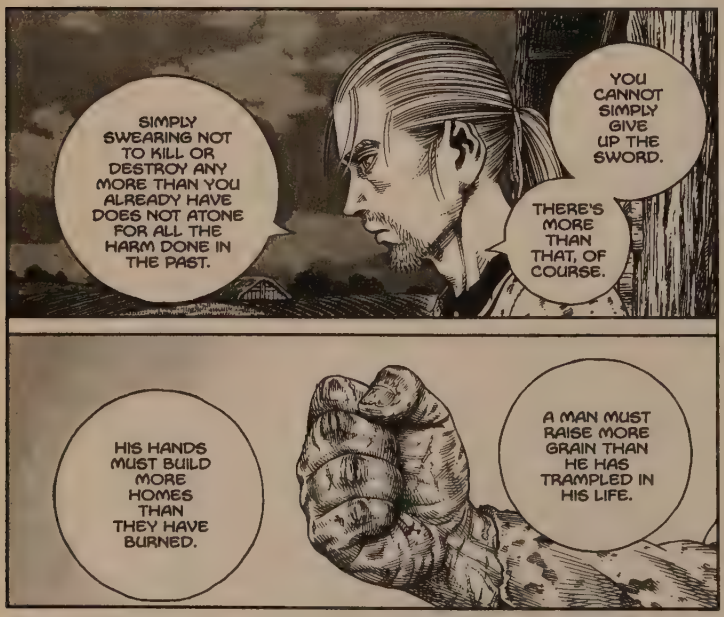


you should. But also, I simply find it a fun task to imagine and draw what food the characters eat, what kind of houses they sleep in, what kind of environment they live in.

Even saying that, of course, we are all human, so there are mistakes scattered here and there in the background images. I can't brag too much. In the future, it's all up to the extent of my diligence, too.

Kodansha Comics: *You said previously that one of the reasons you decided to draw Vinland Saga was because you wanted to address the theme of violence. Was there an event in your life or in the world that made you want to write about this theme?*

Makoto Yukimura: It's not that there was any specific experience or event that made me want to write about the theme of violence.



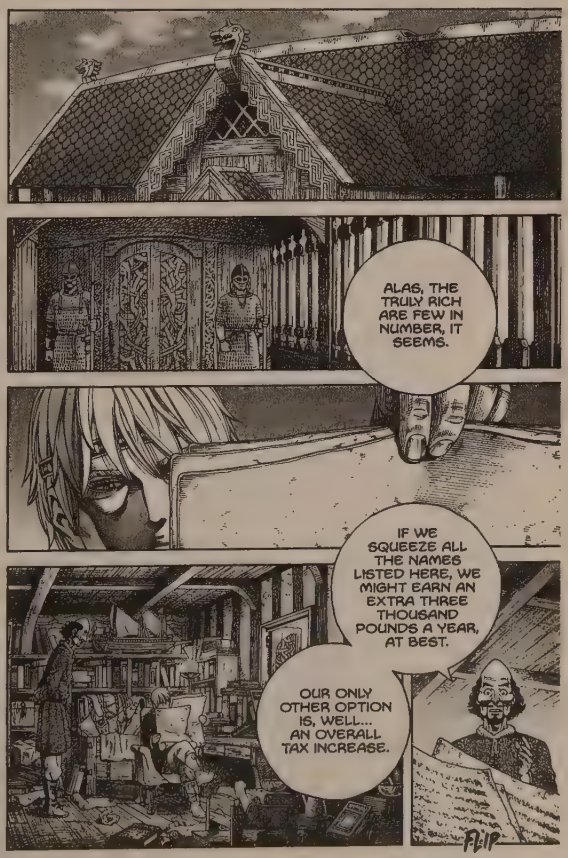
It's just that, in the hero manga of my beloved Japan, no matter what the story is, most of the protagonists are the strongest in that they are the best at doing violence. Meanwhile, the characters who aren't skilled with violence are portrayed as weak. So the story unfolds with the hero repeatedly beating up the bad guys, one after another. Usually, no matter what happens, it's difficult for the hero to escape this destiny.

ASK YUKIMURA

This exclusive Q&A with series creator Makoto Yukimura appears only in the U.S. edition of "Vinland Saga." Future volumes will include them, too, so if you have a question you'd like to ask Mr. Yukimura, please send it to kodanshacomics@randomhouse.com, or to:

Kodansha Comics
451 Park Ave. South, 7th floor
New York, NY 10016

Kodansha Comics: *Your impressive attention to detail in backgrounds is always something Vinland Saga fans point out to us. How much time do you typically spend on backgrounds? What do you think makes them so important to manga?*

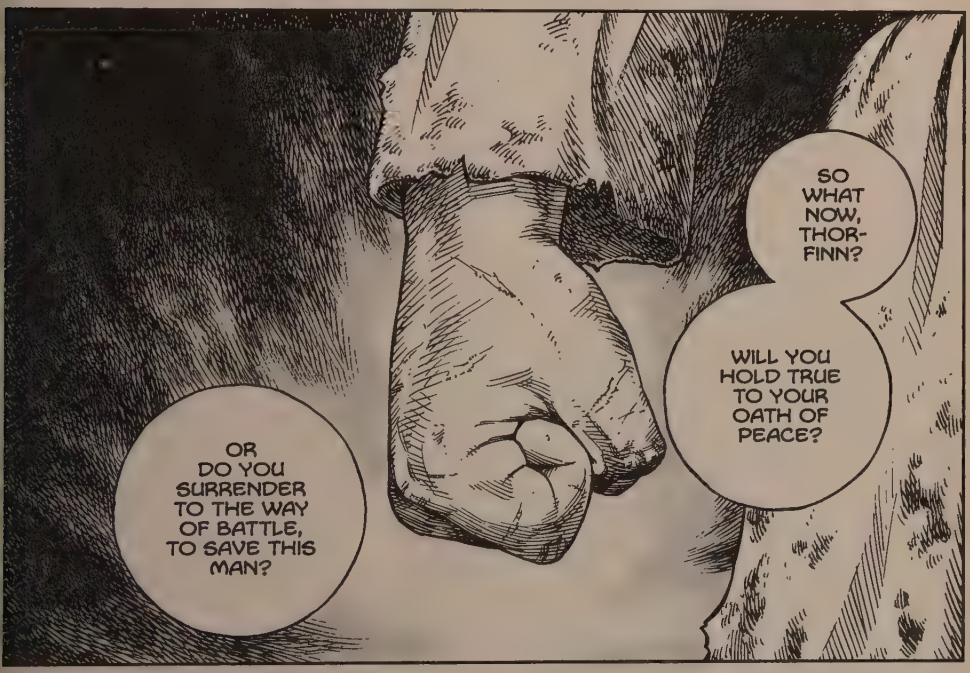


Makoto Yukimura: The backgrounds are a job done by myself and my three staff members together. In other words, they take four times the work of the character drawings, which I do myself. One chapter of about 30 pages requires two weeks of working 12 hours a day.

I believe background drawings are quite essential. The background is the world. I don't think you can tell a story with just the characters, divorced from the world, and I don't think

But what would happen to a hero manga if the protagonist really wished he could escape from this fate of violence? Could you still tell that story without it losing its entertainment value? I decided that I wanted to try that out.

That's one of the many reasons I chose violence as a theme.



SEE YOU IN BOOK SEVEN, COMING DECEMBER 2015!

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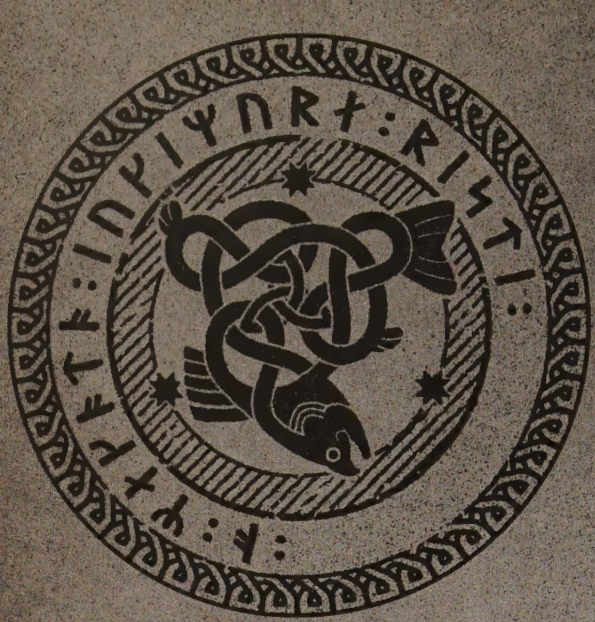

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Within the King's Grasp

As Canute plots to become ruler of the entire Danish world, Thorfinn's only ambition is to see a harvest profitable enough to buy his own life back. But the fates of prince and slave will come together once again, as Canute plans to seize Ketil Farm from its kindhearted master. What sinister tricks does he have up his sleeve, and could they dash Thorfinn's hopes for freedom? Meanwhile, Einar's infatuation with Arnheid takes an unexpected turn when her former husband—an escaped slave—barges onto the farm, insisting she run away with him...

"A fascinating, violent, and moving story [that's] firmly among other timeless classics...Seriously, I don't know how many different ways I can say this manga is worth reading."

—*Kotaku*

"Gripping doesn't begin to describe Vinland Saga. 5 stars."

—*ICv2*

"Deeply engrossing...If you have any interest at all in Vikings, the Medieval period, or pirates, this is not a series you want to miss."

—*Anime News Network*

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